

**Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003**

Beginning Tape One

Question: Good morning, **Alan**.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: Nice to see you in **Washington**.

A: Thank you.

Q: Actually, we're in **Virginia** at this moment.

A: Thank you, thank you.

Q: Tell me what your name is.

A: My name right now is **Alan Kalish**. Before I came to the States, used to be **Adolf Heisler**, and when I took the citizenship out, I changed the name to **Alan Kalish**.

Q: And did you have a -- so you were born **Adolf Heisler**?

A: I was born as **Adolf Heisler**, correct.

Q: Right, be -- did you have a nickname?

A: No -- oh, yes, I did have, **Bumi**.

Q: **Bumi**, where did that come from?

A: Well, from [**indecipherable**] but in that area, **Bumi** was a common name common -- yeah be -- common -- yeah.

Q: Was it a kind of name of endearment that had nothing to do with --

A: Yes, it was a common name of endearment, so --

Q: Uh-huh. And did you have a Hebrew name as well?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: **Avruham**. [indecipherable]

Q: **Avruham**. And is that the Hebrew name of **Adolf**?

A: Yes.

Q: Uh-huh And when were you born?

A: I was born May 18, '27 -- 1927.

Q: 1927. And where were you born?

A: I was born in the little town of **Cinadova**. That was about eight kilometers east of **Mukacevo**, this small little town.

Q: Which is also known as **Munkac**, yes?

A: **Munkac**.

Q: In **Czechoslovakia**.

A: That time it was **Czechoslovakia**, actually it was **Carpathia**.

Q: Right.

A: They called it **Zarpatska rousse**. It was part of **Czech**. **Czech** was divided into four parts, was **Czech**, **Moravia**, **Slovakia**, and **Carpathia**.

Q: Right.

A: So, and I was on the tail end of **Czech -- Czechoslovakia**.

Q: So you're sort of southeast, close -- close to--

A: Yeah, more -- more or less, yeah, more or less east --

Q: Right, right.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: -- of -- of **Czech**.

Q: Let's explore a little bit, your family. Tell me a little bit about your father. What did he do, and what sort of a person was he?

A: Well I -- I was born actually -- we had a farm --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And my father was always -- also involved with my uncle, my -- my uncle was my mother's brother -- in the lumber business. So the farm -- my father -- we also had a -- a guy -- a person who used to handle the fi -- you know, the horses, and do the -- my father and I used to plow the fields, and -- but he also, my father was a -- didn't do much of that, only when he -- he had nothing else to do, would farm, and sht -- you know, stuff like that. And my father and I were like -- I used to guide the horses while he was holding the plow, and we used to do that in springtime, and in the fall he used to go to the field, and stuff like that. I worked hard, but I didn't mind, I was an outside -- outdoor person, so we had -- we had fun.

Q: Did -- were you close re -- with your father?

A: Yes, I was always close my -- well, because I remember in 1939, when the Germans invaded **Sudentenland**, my father was drafted back into the military, and I remember one day he came back from -- with the -- with his lieutenant to visit in a car, and oh my gosh, I thought heavens opened up.

Q: When he came home [**indecipherable**]. So you must have missed him a lot.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yeah. And so did -- who ran the fa -- if he was working more in the lumber business than in -- on the farm --

A: We had -- we had a person who used to --

Q: Run the farm?

A: -- you know, all the -- yeah.

Q: And were you still -- y-you were still working whether your father the -- was there or not?

A: Yes, yes. I was always involved. I -- I was a youngster, and I was pretty strong for a youngst -- guy, I was pretty strong because I was physical -- physically strong, and life was go on.

Q: Did you ride horses?

A: Oh yes, bareback.

Q: Bareback.

A: Bareback, and I remember on Sundays, used to -- I used to take the horses to -- to the river to bathe the horses, and secretly we used to race them. We used to take the best horse and race it with so -- a bunch of ki -- you know, Gentile kids, and we used to go out there, and I got along with them also, because -- and had fun.

Q: And where would you race? In the woods?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: No, it was in the fields there, you know, it was -- there were rows in the field, and used to d-designate a certain distance that you would ta -- race, and -- and that's -- that's what we were doing. Always bareback. I never rode a saddle.

Q: And did you win?

A: Well, twice.

Q: Twice? But these were with working horses, right?

A: Yes, yes. But some of the horses were pretty spirited, and the -- and they rode -- it was hard to get on them, too, you know, because they were bucking, they didn't like to work o -- you know, somebody sit on them, so --

Q: Right.

A: But that's -- was all. I got kicked by a horse one time.

Q: You did?

A: Oh yeah, right in the chest.

Q: A horse you knew, or a horse you didn't know?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, a horse you knew.

A: Yeah, it didn't like what I was doing.

Q: Did the horses like to race, do you think?

A: No.

Q: No.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: No, th-they were farm hor -- [indecipherable] working horses.

Q: So they wanted to rest, then.

A: Well -- and th -- when they wasn't working on the farm, they used to haul lumber. So --

Q: So they were very busy.

A: Was always busy.

Q: Right. And what did your dad do in the lumber business? Was he a partner?

A: He was a minor partner also, but also he was in charge of cutting lumber, and hauling it off from the forest into ever -- wherever it was going. Because lumber at that time, we had no coal, no electricity in a lot of areas. So wood was actually -- lumber -- wood was actually a mainstay for heating and cooking. So everybody had a stove and you cooked with wood.

Q: And what kind of a person was your father? Did he have a sense of humor? Was he --

A: Oh yeah, he was -- he was a fun-loving guy.

Q: Fun loving guy?

A: Yes. He was a fun loving guy.

Q: Was he religious?

A: Not overly religious.

Q: Not overly?

A: No.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Did he go to synagogue on Sabbath?

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Q: He did?

A: Friday night, on **Shabbos**, you know, and --

Q: Really?

A: Oh yes. Wen -- went to the synagogue.

Q: That's pretty religious, isn't it?

A: Well, but -- you know, you talk about religious, you have paya -- **payas**, you know, you have a **Shetl**, or a -- a **Stramel**, I mean, and the hat, but he -- he wore a hat, but none of that -- none of the **sitsis** hanging down, and stuff like that.

Q: So he wasn't Hassidic --

A: No.

Q: -- he wasn't Orthodox.

A: He wasn't Orthodox or Hassidic.

Q: Right.

A: So that's --

Q: Were you kosher in the house?

A: Yes.

Q: You were?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: He was kosher in the house. So -- but I was a rebel, though, you know, because many times used to go out and I al -- volunteered, I'll take the horses out at night to graze them, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: And we would light a fire, a couple of kids, and you know, and they would bring bacon out, and I would cheat, I'd have a little bacon.

Q: And you never told them about that, no.

A: Oh no, no, no, God forbid.

Q: Did you like bacon?

A: Yeah.

Q: You did like it.

A: Yeah.

Q: Are you kosher now?

A: My kids are, but I'm not.

Q: But you're not. What was your father's name?

A: **Oren Leid -- Aaron Leid.**

Q: **Aaron.**

A: **Aaron Leid.**

Q: **Leid -- L -- L-e-i-d?**

A: Yeah.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: **Heisler**.

A: **He -- Heisler**, correct.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well the -- the way we became **Heisler** is my grandfather, when he married my grandmother, they married at a rabbi. And when the Czechs came in in 19 for -- fort -- 18, they didn't recognize that marriage, so they made my father change to **Heisler**. But my uncles were already in the States that time, so they were **Kalish**, and we were **Heisler**. And that's how we became **Heisler**.

Q: Wait a minute, I don't understand. Why did you fa -- why did your father have to become a **Heisler**?

A: Because my grandfather and grandmother didn't get married in court, only by a rabbi.

Q: Right, and that wasn't ri --

A: And they did -- that wasn't recognized.

Q: And what was their name?

A: **Heisler**.

Q: W-Was it --

A: Well, my grandfather was **Kalish**, but my grandmother was **Heisler**. So **Kalish** didn't exist as far as my father was concerned.

Q: I see. It was **Heisler**.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: It was **Heisler**, yeah, he had to change to **Heisler**. It was, you know, by law -- in the court, or -- or whatever the -- whoever they used to call it, he was [**indecipherable**] that -
- that's how they [**indecipherable**]

Q: Tell me about your mother, what was her name?

A: **Fa -- Fagel.**

Q: **Fagel.**

A: Yeah.

Q: **Fay.**

A: **Fay.**

Q: What was she like?

A: She -- she was a hard working lady.

Q: She worked on a far -- wor -- she worked with everybody.

A: Well, what do you call it? First of all, we lived basically on the farm, so --

Q: Mm-hm. You lived off the farm, yeah.

A: You -- what do you call, they had a garden with, you know, I would -- I would plow up, or whatever with the horses, the garden, and plant whatever, tomatoes, corn, and stuff like that. And they would, you know, prepare the food, and Friday morning at four o'clock, my m-mother and grandmother were up, bake a **challah**, and baking bread for the whole week. And cooking, and then in the afternoon making the **chulent**, and putting it in the oven, you know, and stuff. So th-they were -- I tell you, I can't believe it, how

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

hard they used to work. Looking today what women do, and how they were working -- used to -- what do you call it, laundry. Laundry you would -- you wo -- you didn't have wa-washing machines or anything like that. You washed them by hand, then you -- what do you call it, boil them, and then you go to the river, you know, with a bag on the -- on the back, and rinse them out in a -- what do you call it, in a stream. It's --

Q: So it was hard work.

A: -- and -- and then they would -- oh, it's very hard work. And that's what the women do, it was accepted.

Q: What is **chulent**? They were making **chulent**, could you explain that?

A: Well, **chulent** is -- you couldn't cook on fr -- on s -- on Saturday, so what you do is you prepare meals, and you heat -- stove was already heated up because they was baking bread and stuff like that. So you would put the dishes with food in there, and -- and would -- slow cooking is li -- like a crock-pot today. And will stay there until Saturday.

Noontime when you come back from **shule**, you open up the stove, and you take all that food out, and it was hot, and it was prepared, it was cooked. And that's -- it was chu --

Q: And that's what -- and that's what's called **chulent**?

A: It was called **chulent**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I don't know if any bro -- abada -- ah -- if anybody knows it in the States or not, but that's how it was, that's how life was.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And were you close with your mother, or closer with your father, in so far as you remember?

A: I -- I -- I don't think I could answer that, because w-we were a close family, you know? My brother -- my younger brother, he liked to be in the house, with -- helping with my mother. I liked to be outside, doing all the work outside, you know?

Q: Is this **Moishe**, or **David**?

A: **David. Moishe** was too young. **Moishe** was a tough little kid, you know, he was really -- he was -- he -- he had his own mind, and one day my mother scolded him for something, he ran out of the house, and it was a cold day, a cold evening. And he hid up in the tree, and we were looking high and low, we couldn't find him. Finally we fou -- somebody looked -- looked up, there he was hiding in the tree, you know, almost froze to death, but he got down, and he was okay.

Q: Now, you were born in '27, **David** was born in 1930, is that right?

A: Twen -- he was two years young, 1929.

Q: 1929. And then **Moishe**?

A: **Moishe** was in 19 -- he was about four years ol -- younger than **David**.

Q: Four years younger than **David**?

A: Yes, he was -- he was --

Q: So, 1933?

A: Yeah, some -- some place like that.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Uh-huh. So were you all as kids very different, as -- **Moishe** seems very different from you.

A: Oh yes, yes. Well, I -- I was also kind of a rebel al-already [**indecipherable**]

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I was fighting all the time with kids, you know, and stuff like that.

Q: Oh, you were?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Why? What -- why would --

A: Well because they -- they don't -- if somebody picked on my brother, God help him.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know, I was over there and beat him up. So -- well, like I said, I was str-strong kid, and --

Q: Would you fight for no reason? Did you like fi -- did you like to fight, or you fought because something happened that you felt was wrong?

A: Because something happened, not [**indecipherable**] yeah, was because something hap -- I was really protective of my brothers, and --

Q: And did your parents approve of that, did they think that was okay?

A: Nope.

Q: They didn't?

A: Nope.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Did they punish you?

A: Well, I remember one -- when -- one day in school I -- I think it was in fifth grade, I pulled a girl's hair, she was in front of me, you know, and teacher, come on out, and put my hand out like so -- I had to put my hand, and she had that ruler, and she whacked me about -- about four or five times. And I saw the stars coming out.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah. But I -- I was a pretty good student.

Q: Did you pull a girl's hair again after that, or you just said --

A: No, no.

Q: -- no, this is --

A: No, I couldn't -- I couldn't afford it any more.

Q: Did you like school?

A: Yes.

Q: What -- did you have favorite subjects when you were a kid?

A: Not really. I -- I just -- just you know, I just like school, and I -- whatever was required, I --

Q: You did.

A: I did, in school.

Q: Yeah. Did you help your brothers when they went to school?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: We -- yes, my -- **David**, I used to help **David**, because he wa -- he was a little slower.

And **Moishe** was too young yet, that time. So --

Q: Did **Moishe** like to be with you and **David**?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Follow you around?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Q: Did he ever fight with you?

A: No.

Q: No. You were too old.

A: No, I never fought with my brothers.

Q: You never did?

A: No.

Q: Really?

A: No, I never fought with my brothers.

Q: Did you have friends, a lot of friends?

A: Yeah.

Q: Both Gentile and Jewish?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Most -- mostly Jewish, ge -- a -- and I'll tell you, like I'm -- Saturday afternoon, that's the only time we had, because was no **Cheder**, no nothing. We used to sneak out and play soccer.

Q: On the Sabbath?

A: Oh yeah, and then the elders found out, and they made a big issue, and blah, blah, blah. But that didn't change, we used to -- because the only time we have. Sunday was **Cheder**. During the week went to school, in the afternoon was **Cheder** so, that's the only time we had, is to have a -- to have a little fun.

Q: So -- so you have regular school, and then you had [**indecipherable**] **Cheder**, which is a --

A: A Hebrew school.

Q: -- Hebrew school.

A: Every afternoon.

Q: Every afternoon.

A: Every afternoon.

Q: And then on s -- on the sa --

A: On suda -- on Sunday all day.

Q: Sunday all day, and Saturday you're in synagogue?

A: Saturday morning, and after dinner, shab -- **Shabbos** dinner, we couldn't do anything, so we --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Soccer.

A: -- we play -- play soccer, and sometimes we would walk down to munk -- **Munkac**, there was a brewery down there, and we have a beer down there, and walk back.

Q: Really?

A: Well you -- there was no age limit on -- on drinking down there, and --

Q: So how old were you when you started doing that?

A: I was about 13 -- about 14 - 15 years old.

Q: I see.

A: We would walk down, and there were boys and girls to the brewery, and I was the youngest, and -- from the clique.

Q: Right.

A: So that's how I was.

Q: Tell me, what were meals like at your house? Did everybody -- everybody was supposed to eat together, mother and father, and the three boys?

A: Yes, we al -- all the meals were together.

Q: And your grandma was living there, am I right?

A: Grandma and Grandpa.

Q: Both of them?

A: Yeah.

Q: On your fa -- o-on your mother's side, or your father's side?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Oh my father's side.

Q: I see.

A: On my mother's side they lived in a **Shubin**, in a lo -- a tiny little town in the woods there, you know, and they were also involved deeply in lumber, on my mother's side.

Q: Mm-hm. So did you see them a good deal?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: I -- I was the first grandchild.

Q: So you were important?

A: So I was -- I was very important. I -- I was -- we used to go there and visit them all the time. I used to go down, oh I would say about a kilometer, used to be a **sigh** in the street. You go on up there, and I used to meet my grandfather, and we would go up there into -- up in the hills, actually. And I -- I loved it up there, I remember one time I was lost. I couldn't -- I wasn't lost, but they were looking for me. So they looked all over, and then all of a sudden, I was in -- I was in the bedroom, knocked out. I found some whiskey there, and I found a cigar. And I went out like a light.

Q: Between the whiskey and the cigar?

A: Yeah. So --

Q: So they found you in the bedroom?

A: They found me -- they found me in the bedroom, out like a light.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: With the bottle, or you had --

A: I put the bottle down --

Q: I see.

A: -- and the cigar was -- went out, you know, so I wasn't puffing, so I was about six years -- five, six years old.

Q: And did they say anything to you?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Are you kidding? They were glad they found me.

Q: Was this little town primarily Jewish, or was it --

A: No, no, it was just --

Q: It wasn't.

A: -- was a -- a minor -- Jews were a minority there.

Q: So how big is this town? The town is --

A: Town was about three -- three or 4,000 people.

Q: It really is small, so what proportion might be Jewish **[indecipherable]**

A: I would say there's about 200 families, maybe less.

Q: Really? So really a small minority.

A: Yeah, maybe less than 200 families.

Q: Mm-hm.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: But it was a small community with a -- we had a small **schule**, we had no rabbi, we had a **shochet**, and the **shochet** was a **shochet** and a rabbi.

Q: What is a **shochet**?

A: A **shochet** is a guy who kills animals, to make it kosher.

Q: And he served as the rabbi?

A: He served as the rabbi, too. I rememb --

Q: That's quite a combination.

A: -- I remember on Friday morning I used to take a chicken and go over and have it killed, and then my mother, and grandmother would pluck it and cook it for Saturday.

Q: So the **shochet** would kill the chicken?

A: Yes.

Q: You wouldn't -- you wouldn't do it in the farm?

A: No.

Q: Also, we had sheep, and -- you know, som -- there were -- and we would also bring it down to the butcher, and the **shochets** would kill it over there, and the butcher would prepare it, and we would take, you know, take the meat.

Q: Right. Did you ever get close to these animals, I mean, did you get upset by doing this, or not?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: When you live on a farm, you don't get close to -- e-everything has a purpose. Every cat didn't do his job and kill mice or rats, cat was gone. If a dog didn't protect your property, dog was gone. Everything has a purpose in life, and there's --

Q: So **[indecipherable]**

A: -- no waste.

Q: No waste, and no pets.

A: No pets **[indecipherable]**

Q: That was a waste.

A: No, no pets. Couldn't a -- couldn't afford pets.

Q: Right. How would you describe your family economically? Were you poor, were you sort of well off? How would you describe --

A: I would say on the -- more or less on the poor side. A little better than poor-poor, you know, but a little higher than really poor.

Q: There were no luxuries --

A: No, no lux --

Q: -- no vacations.

A: -- no, no.

Q: Did your parents ever go on a vacation?

A: No.

Q: They didn't.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: No.

Q: So everybody just --

A: Just worked --

Q: -- worked to survive.

A: -- a -- and **[indecipherable]**

Q: Right. Was there very much anti-Semitism in this town that you remember? I'm talking before the -- before '38.

A: It wasn't -- during the Czechs, it wasn't too bad, but once the Czechs were ousted, and then the Ukrainians took over, and then the Hungarians, and that -- when the Hungarians took over, it got even worse.

Q: Right.

A: That's the time it started, when the Hungarians took over. It was during the war, and the Germans just told them to take that section of the country off, and --

Q: Were you -- in 1933 you were really young, so I can't imagine, but by '36 or '37, were you at all conscious that there were Nazis in **Germany**? Was anybody talking about that?

A: I'll -- I'll tell you something better than that. I remember was a German family living a couple of houses down from us, and I played with their kids and all that. Well, in 1943, this guy c-came on vacation from the German army, he had the **SS** uniform. We had no idea what that meant. We had no idea what he was doing. And I talked to him, and we

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

kidded around with him, and all that stuff. And we -- we were actually blindsided by the whole thing.

Q: That was in 1943, so late --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and you still didn't have any --

A: We had no idea what was going on.

Q: So when did the Ukrainians take that part of **Czechoslovakia**?

A: Krane -- the Ukrainians took over in 1940 -- mud -- just before '41.

Q: And the Hungarians are after?

A: Oh yeah, in 1942.

Q: So, what happens in '38 - '39 -- thir -- '38 when --

A: The Ukrainians had autonomy there, that section of **Carpathia**, the ukra -- Ukrainians had autonomy. So they were self-governing, but then the Hungarians came in. First they came in up to **Mukacevo**. And aft --

Q: I see. So the Ukrainians had **Cinadova**, and the -- the -- the Hungarians had --

A: **Mukacevo**.

Q: -- **Mukacevo**, I see, yes.

A: And then all of a sudden, the Hungarians were out, and th-the Hungarians are -- Ukrainians were out, and the Hungarians took over the whole of **Carpathia**.

Q: Right, right. So, did your life remain more or less the same until very late?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: So when -- when do you experience a real change?

A: Well, the thing is my father got killed in 1943, I think it was.

Q: Or was it '42, do you remember?

A: '42 or '43 --

Q: -- to '43, uh-huh.

A: -- it was sometime around there.

Q: And how did -- how did that happen?

A: Well, he was -- like I said, it was a holiday, a Gentile holiday, and what do you call it, didn't work any transport lumber, and there was [indecipherable] so he couldn't do anything. So he, with the guy who did the -- with the farming and all that stuff, they went out to pick up lumber, and I don't know, and lumber, just wood for the [indecipherable] you know, and they were coming back, and the wagon hit a rock and flipped over, and on top of him. And that's how he -- he died.

Q: And you were very young.

A: And I was very young.

Q: So this must have been a big shock

A: Oh sure.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: -- it was just awful, huh?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember the funeral?

A: Yes.

Q: What was that like?

A: Well, it's -- it was tragic.

Q: Yeah.

A: I remember I was coming back from a small town because somebody had something that belonged to us in another small, little town, and I was coming back, and I saw people whispering over there, that there he is, you know, and I had no idea what was going, until I got back home, I found out my dad --

Q: [indecipherable] he died. And your mother now, does she take over the re -- business?

A: Well no, just -- she just took over the farm, and I was -- basically I was -- I was -- I was all of a sudden the man of the house. And I used to go out and plow on the -- on days off sometimes, the fields, and stuff like that. And --

Q: So at 15 or 16, you --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- you take on --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Well, I'll tell you, at that age I was very strong. I -- I was able to pick up a hundred kilos.

Q: Really?

A: And throw it over my shoulders, and -- and carry it.

Q: Huh.

A: About 16 years of age. So --

Q: And did **David** also help by then --

A: Oh yes.

Q: -- because he was **[indecipherable]**

A: Yeah, we both did a lot of --

Q: And **Moishe** was still too young?

A: He was still -- he was still too young.

Q: Right.

A: So --

Q: But this must have been also very hard on your mother.

A: Oh sure, oh sure. And then taxes were coming due, and she didn't have any money.

Finally she scraped up some money, because they were going to repossess the house and stuff like that, you know so finally we got that resolved.

Q: Did -- were you paying a mortgage for the --

A: No.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: No.

A: No, we owned everything we owned, outright.

Q: Oh, so it was just the taxes that were owed.

A: Was just taxes.

Q: Right. And your gram -- grandmother and grandfather are still living with you?

A: At that time yes, my grandfather was still alive, but he -- he was -- he didn't do anything, I mean, much fena -- he used to sit there and -- and just trying to guide us as such **[indecipherable]**

Q: So is -- does la -- do you have to stop school because your dad died, or -- and you have to work **[indecipherable]** or no?

A: Well, no, I did not s -- but I -- something else happened. Is -- I did go to school because it was important that my mother and sister that I go to school. But in the evening they used to have class for the Hungarians, military preparedness. And all of a sudden one day I -- I didn't attend, because I was busy, you know, I had a lot of work to do. And one day the **gendarmes** come over and pick me up. They walk me -- it was about 15 kilometers to **Svalava**, which was a military complex, and there they **[indecipherable]** me up there and said **[indecipherable]** I was the only Jewish kid, was a lot of the Gentile kids, and the lieutenant asked me questions, why didn't you go to school, and I didn't have a chance to answer him, and he gave me a slap on my face, I thought my f -- well, even my head is going to spin off. And I was about 15 - 16 year -- you know, years old.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

And then they put us in a cell, which is about a third of this room, with 20 of us in there.

No beds, no nothing, and we used to take turns to sleep, one at a -- you know, a few of us at a time, we decided. And I was in that -- and they disinfected our clothes. And I was there for about two weeks, and I understand my mother went to the priest and tried to ask him to interfere -- intervene, and that's how I got out after two weeks. And I came home on **Shabbos**, you know. My clothes, from the disinfection was all torn up and everything else, and they were sitting having **Shabbos** dinner, and that's how I got home, so --

Q: We have to change the tape now.

A: Okay.

End of Tape One

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Beginning Tape Two

Q: **Alan**, I know you got out of this little jail -- prison --

A: Yes.

Q: -- after a couple of weeks, but what was that like for you for two weeks? It's ha --

A: Was terrible, was terrible, the worst. Was -- you know, we -- w-we -- y-you stay there, and after a few days, it wa -- we were let out, just to get the fresh air a little bit. Otherwise we were locked up there, standing up like a bunch of dummies.

Q: And you were all about 14 or 15 years old?

A: Yeah, only school kids.

Q: And was there a bucket here, so fo -- as a toilet? I mean, what did you do?

A: Well, actually was -- you know, was a -- we were allowed to go one at a time to the john.

Q: You were.

A: It was a -- yeah, and it was a military barracks, and you were allowed to go. If you had to go you knocked on the cell and somebody would let you out. It's -- it's something that I don't remember very much that -- you know, it's kind of got out of my mind because it was so horrible there, you know? But -- two weeks to be under that -- under those conditions. So --

Q: Why do you think they listened to your mother, a -- and the priest? Why did she go to a priest, that's first. Do you know why?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: It was the only a-authority that I would -- th-the Hungarians would listen. A rabbi wouldn't -- I mean, we -- first of all, we didn't have a rabbi.

Q: That's right, yeah.

A: And the **shochet** had -- was useless really, because he -- aya -- he had no a -- no authority as such, I mean, and even a rabbi, those days anti-Semitism was really starting to get, you know, noticed. I also remember after the Hungarians came in, this colonel wanted all the Jews -- males 13 and up to come over for a meeting. And he started to lambaste everybody. The Jews are the only ones who are non-productive, non -- no -- nothing. The -- everybody works on Saturday except the Jews, and the Jews better start working on Saturday. So all of a sudden, I was selected to go and get the horses, and go haul some lumber, and stu -- o-on **Shabbos**, you know, and a couple of stores had to be opened up, because most of the Jews were what do you call, have stores, or some kind of a -- we -- we -- we were very -- I think about two or three families had land. So that was - - and after that, you know, it kind of dwindled down a little bit, but the next Saturday -- it was Friday afternoon. So this guy was a real firebrand, and as far as Jews were concerned.

Q: But people didn't work on Sunday. Christians didn't work on Sunday.

A: I we -- we -- Sunday, by law, you cou -- you're not allowed to work, okay? So mash --

Q: So whether you were Jewish, or not Jewish, you weren't allowed to work?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Correct. But we -- we would go work in the fields on Sunday, and we a -- they always used to light us up, you know, the police, but no-nothing ever happened. Nothing ever happened.

Q: And why do you think -- I know this may seem like a funny detail, but why do you think the priest listened to your mother? Did -- did he know her? Was it the town's **[indecipherable]**

A: Well, it was a small town, everybody knew everybody and they all **[indecipherable]**. It was a Catholic priest, and he had a girlfriend there, that -- somebody's wife, so everybody knew about that, you know **[indecipherable]**

Q: I see.

A: She was a ni -- a beautiful woman, you know, and -- but he used to court her.

Q: I see. So was your mother surprised when you came home, when you walked in on the **Shabbos** dinner?

A: Yes.

Q: She was?

A: Oh yes.

Q: But everybody must have been really happy to finally see you.

A: Oh sure, oh sure.

Q: Wi -- did -- had you lost weight, from --

A: Yes.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Yes?

A: Yes.

Q: Were -- was this the first time that you were s -- were you scared? Was that --

A: Well, was other people there, and yes, you're scared, but you know, you figure it's not going to last forever.

Q: That's what you thought?

A: Yeah. Eventually they have to let you go. Because I was the only Jewish kid over there [**indecipherable**]

Q: So you didn't see it as anything in particular [**indecipherable**]

A: No, there's nothing anti-Semitic, or anything else, was just strictly punished for not attending the military preparedness.

Q: Right.

A: If you were 13 and over, or 14 and over, you had to attend military preparedness at -- in the evening.

Q: Right. Did you have a **Bar Mitzvah** when you were 13?

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Oh yes.

Q: This is after your father died, however, right? Or not? No --

A: No, it was -- my father was still --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: -- no, it would have been before.

A: -- my father was still -- I even had to make a speech and all that, [indecipherable]
things like [indecipherable] with it, you know, so --

Q: Did you like doing it?

A: I didn't mind. I was --

Q: But it wasn't a big deal?

A: It was no big deal, you know, I was --

Q: Was there a party?

A: Yeah well, I had a little schnapps, you know, and some cake and stuff like that. It was
not like over here, with bands and stuff like that, you know, this is -- over here in the
States, it's just like having a wedding or something.

Q: Right, right.

A: I had a little schnapps, had a little cake, you know, and stuff like that.

Q: With your friends as well, or just the family?

A: Just the -- no, friends also -- neighbors.

Q: Neighbors.

A: Neighbors. Friendly neighbors.

Q: Right.

A: Neighbors that we would -- and then surely, you know how you brought out a couple
of bottles of whiskey there, you know, schnapps, and --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Right.

A: -- everybody had a drink, and I'll tell you something, whenever there was a **yahrzeit** or something, we would -- everybody had a drink, I would say thir -- 14 - 15 years old, I always go over and take a s -- a shot of schnapps, and -- and my father, we -- he was up early in the morning, and he used to pour himself a glass, a half a glass of whiskey and drink it down, and that was it. And have breakfast and go out.

Q: In the morning?

A: Yes.

Q: Before doing anything?

A: Before doing anything, it's the first thing he had.

Q: Interesting.

A: It was funny because when my brother came to the States, and it was in 1965, and we were living upstate in **Horseheads** that time, and we stayed -- they got to the -- to **New York**, it was about, you know -- you know, late in the afternoon, so we didn't feel like driving, it's about a five hour drive. And when we got a -- there was a cousin of my wife's living in **Mount Vernon, New York**, and we stayed with them, the whole family, and my brother, first thing he did is bring out a bottle of vodka. Instead of orange juice, you know, they had a bottle of vodka, you know, and everybody was pouring himself a bo -- a sho -- a shot of vodka. So to be friendly, I had a shot of vodka before breakfast. So, yeah, that was --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And you -- and you were able to do that?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: And not just go out --

A: No.

Q: -- like you did when you were six years old?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: Well, I -- like I said, you know, you -- you went to **schule**, and you had the boy -- or **yahrzeit** or whatever, and there was whiskey there, you went over there, you had a shot of booze, you know [**indecipherable**]

Q: Right. Would you explain what a **yahrzeit** is?

A: **Yahrzeit** is like if somebody passed away, and the first -- I mean, every m -- what do you call it, anniversary like, or whatever you call it, you h-have -- yeah, you say **kaddish**, and you also had a bottle of, you know, whiskey or something, with some cake, to celebrate.

Q: Right. To memorialize, right?

A: In memor -- a memory of that -- of that person.

Q: What -- were you going to a trade school by 19 -- by the time you were -- your father died?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes, my mother decided that there's no -- what do you call it, no future on the farm. They didn't want me to be on the farm. I was sent to a trade school, and that was in **Munkacs**. So I went to -- it was a mechanics, and I was there, and you had to go to school also, because in **Europe** a trade school meant that I have to go also to theory, and you know, general information. And every six months the state would come in and test you, see if you are advancing theoretically, and practically. And if you didn't, you just dropped out, you couldn't rejoin. So that's how it -- it worked.

Q: So is this a very long day? Is it the daytime and the evening, or you -- it's part-time?

A: Well, it was dur -- during the day --

Q: Okay.

A: -- actually in the morning, it -- it took about five hours to go through the -- what do you call, the theoretical part of it. And i-it was really -- you learned a lot.

Q: And it was the theoretical part of the trade that you were --

A: Correct.

Q: -- and -- and what trade were you studying?

A: Mechanics.

Q: Mechanics.

A: Mechanics. Was a lot of plumbing, yeah, general mechanics.

Q: And do you know about how old you were when you started this?

A: I was about 15 -- 14 - 15, something like that.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: So it would have been 1943?

A: Yeah, '42 --

Q: About a year -- a year bef --

A: -- '42 - '43.

Q: -- 40 --

A: Even when the Hungarian owned it, and we were allowed to go in there. See, they would let you in the --

Q: Yes.

A: -- to go in there, and go -- go to school -- trade school.

Q: Did you travel from home and then go back home? Or did you stay at the school?

A: I stayed at the school -- no, ma -- I had a -- what my gram -- my maternal grandparents moved down to **Munkac**, so I would stay with them there, you know, and during the weekend I would go home.

Q: Right.

A: So that's --

Q: Was it different? This is -- to go to **Munkac**? Was there s -- was there a different feeling because the Hungarians [**indecipherable**] at this point?

A: Well they -- ye -- it was -- yes, it definitely was a difference, because the c-city was kind of dull. **Munkac** was a thriving city, aya -- about 35 - 40,000 people there. It was a

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

ma -- a more or less modern city, and all of a sudden it was dull. Everybody was afraid to say anything, or do anything, and it was really trying to -- starting to get tough.

Q: And was there a problem with you as a Jewish young man going in?

A: No, no, no, not at that point yet, no.

Q: Not at that point.

A: Not at that point yet.

Q: Uh-huh. And -- and there's no -- there's no particular problem on the farm with -- because you're Jewish?

A: No, no, no, no --

Q: So life s -- life goes on.

A: Life goes on. We will -- we worked the farm, and we had actually during harvest time, like we had wheat, and so on. And I go in and ha -- with -- the other neighbors would come in and help, and we would go out and help the neighbors, you know, the [indecipherable]. We were the only family who were doing all that, and we had no problem.

Q: Are you hearing any rumors about what's happening in **Slovakia**, that there are deportations from **Slovakia**?

A: No.

Q: Nothing?

A: No.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Does that surprise you now when you think about it?

A: I -- I told you, we had no idea what was going on.

Q: I know.

A: I mean, we were totally isolated from the world. The only reason we knew what -- a war was going on, because we heard the guns when the Germans invaded **Poland**.

Q: Did you have a radio?

A: No. We had no electricity.

Q: Of course not --

A: We had no running water.

Q: -- right, right.

A: We had nothing.

Q: So you can't get news from that -- is there -- are there newspapers, or they're all censored?

A: Newspapers -- not in the town.

Q: Not in the town.

A: We had to go to **Munkac** to get a newspaper.

Q: I see.

A: **Munkac** -- new -- **Munkac** had a newspaper.

Q: So, when you went to **Munkac**, did you -- would you buy the newspaper?

A: No.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: You wouldn't, because this was not a traditional thing for you to do?

A: No.

Q: Uh-huh. So it's not surprising at all that you would be -- the war --

A: Total --

Q: -- there is no world, except the -- i -- the small world in which you --

A: That's right, I told you, this guy was an **SS** guy --

Q: Right.

A: -- in 1943 he came home, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- he was a friend of mine. Actually, he w -- I wa -- I was a little younger, but I -- his brothers, I used to play with his brothers all the time. And I had no idea what he -- he wa -- all I knew, he was a volunteer in the German army. So --

Q: And when you went to school in **Munkac**, nobody talked about --

A: No.

Q: -- that there -- nobody talk -- it's interesting. Does your mother start dating?

A: No.

Q: No, so she stays a widow.

A: She stays a widow.

Q: Right. Was sh -- how old a woman was she when your father died, do you know, about?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: She was in her early thir -- in her 30's.

Q: In her 30's, so she was a young woman.

A: She was a young woman. Well, what do you call it, when the Hungarians invaded, was some Jewish military guys, tried to date her. But, you know, dating over there wasn't like over here, you t -- you date and you take them for dinner, you take them, you know, a movie or sa -- there was no such a thing. So you just talk.

Q: And she wasn't interested.

A: She wasn't interested in talk.

Q: Right. Hm. So something radically changes in 1944, I gather.

A: Correct.

Q: In March of 1944, when the Germans come in.

A: Well, the Hungarians -- you als -- the Hungarians allowed the Germans to come in --

Q: Right.

A: -- and take over that time.

Q: Because mun -- **Munkac** is already under Hungarian occupation.

A: Correct.

Q: At what point does syna -- **Cinadova** become occupied by the Hungarians, is that in '43?

A: In '43.

Q: And then the Germans come in in '44?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Correct.

Q: So, are things very different in '43 when the Hungarians -- or not so different?

A: Not so different because, you know, we were so close to -- to **Munkac**, and alla -- and I had to change schools over -- I had to learn Hungarian, you know, and start learning, and talk Hungarian, learn -- first it was Czech, then was Ukrainian. But Ukrainian was a popu -- a popular area there, you know, was all Ukrainians, so you spoke Ukrainian anyhow because the kids and everything else, even though you didn't go to **[indecipherable]** Ukrainian school. But all of a sudden, Hungarian was a ch -- a strange language. So all of a sudden you went to school, you learned Hungarian fast and furious.

Q: And your brothers were also going to school, but in sin -- **Cinadova**?

A: Yes, in cin -- everybody went to **Cinadova**.

Q: In **Cinadova**. Uh-huh, okay. So within a month or two after the Germans come into the area, a ghetto was formed in --

A: In **Munkac**.

Q: In **Munkac**.

A: We didn't even know that either.

Q: You didn't know?

A: No.

Q: Even though you were still at school there?

A: No, I was not in school

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Uh-huh, by '44 you had finished?

A: Well -- well, wait a minute. I -- I think I still was in school that time. But th-they didn't -- all -- it happened all of a sudden, okay? All of a sudden they -- that brick factory, they closed it off, and they got it ready, and what do you call it, they started to accumulate people.

Q: And -- but you're living -- you're going -- you're still going to school, but you're living in **Cinadova**.

A: Correct. But we -- we didn't know what was going on that time, and we heard some rumors that, you know, they are interning sa -- interning some Jews, but nobody made a - - you know, no big deal, you know [**indecipherable**] you know, you didn't know what to make of it.

Q: And you weren't quite sure what it meant anyway.

A: No. And once we got there ourselves, to **Munkac**, the Germans will tell us that they're taking us down south to **Hungary**, all the Jews, and they'll be farming aw -- give them farms over there, and do the farming, and live together. That's what the story was.

Q: That's what they said. But before -- ho-how did you get to the ghetto? Who -- who came and got you?

A: The shar -- Hungarian gendarmes.

Q: They knocked at the door?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Knocked on the door, and we -- and just, pack whatever you can carry, and let's go. We said, [**indecipherable**] cows, and animals, you know. Somebody'll take care of it, let's go. Took some bedding and stuff like that, and some food, and carry it on our shoulder for about three, four kilometers to the train station, load it up over there. And the whole line was about 15 kilometers, because it was further east. And then **Munkac** all of a sudden it was about 15 kilometers total to go to **Munkac**, to the brick factory. And over there was open, just a roof on top.

Q: And wa -- wa -- I -- I want to get back to these guys knocking at your door. Who answers? Do you answer, or your mother answers?

A: Oh I don't know -- I think my mother. I think my mother answers..

Q: And is this a complete shock to you?

A: Yes.

Q: It -- you -- nobody ever expected someone to knock at the door?

A: No, none whatsoever, no idea.

Q: And did you all talk with each other, what shall we take, what shall we take, I mean --

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: And so then you made decisions amongst all of you?

A: If I would have known what was happening, I was -- I would have taken off.

Q: You would have left?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: I would have left, yeah, hid someplace. I was resourceful enough, I could a -- I could have survived, actually. But when you don't know anything -- but even in the **Munkac** ghetto, you had no idea that we're gonna wind up in **Auschwitz**.

Q: Right.

A: You know.

Q: Did -- did the -- did they treat you badly, the gendarmes, or were they fairly --

A: No, nothing.

Q: Nothing?

A: Nothing. Just escorted us **walyow** -- escorted us.

Q: So you weren't brutalized, and you weren't fearful?

A: No, none whatsoever.

Q: Uh-huh. So what does this place look like? It's a former brick factory, are you --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and are you inside, are you outside? There's --

A: No, wa -- outside, but there's o -- was only a roof.

Q: Just a roof?

A: Nothing else.

Q: Because the bricks were made just under --

A: Yes.

Q: -- I -- outs -- I see.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Was no walls, **ites** -- whatsoever.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And you laid your bedding down, and had your food over there, whatever you had, you know, like used -- I don't remember what day of the week it was --

Q: Right.

A: -- but you know, you take your bread, whatever you have, or whatever -- whatever, and you go.

Q: Was it cool? It's ma -- it was May, wasn't it?

A: It was in May, yes. It was -- the weather was nice, was livable.

Q: Livable. And how many Jew -- do you recall about how many other families there were, how many other people there were there?

A: Well, the whole town, actually [**indecipherable**]

Q: The whole town?

A: The whole town was asse -- assembled.

Q: But they must have been taking Jews not from just **Cinadova**, but from other places as well.

A: Well, that particular was **Cinadova**, then they went all over --

Q: I see.

A: -- to -- to **Svalava**, they went to -- anyhow, they accumulated and just bed them down there. And once we got there, there was a Germans. The German Gestapo was there --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: In that --

A: -- in -- in the ghetto.

Q: And what was that like?

A: Well, they didn't bother everybody, but whoever was -- especially they -- that's -- they knew who was well-to-do, they had them run through the water -- through the mud and everything else, with bricks on their head, and you know, some of them fainted, and ah -- bi -- bi -- but not everybody, just certain people.

Q: Was this very shocking to you **[indecipherable]**

A: It was -- it was starting to, yeah, it did get shocking, but --

Q: There's nothing to do.

A: No, nothing to be said or done. The Gestapo was there, and they didn't shoot anybody as such, but --

Q: And the only food you had was the food you brought?

A: Correct.

Q: And were people, other Jews around you talking? Had they heard what was going on? Did they say, we're going to --

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: So everybody was in the same --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Same frame of mind.

Q: How long were you there, do you remember?

A: I would say about a week and a half to two weeks. Not too long.

Q: But still, a week and a half or two weeks with doing nothing, outside. You're told something, and I suppose you believe it.

A: Yeah.

Q: -- you believe they're going to send you to **Hungary** to be on a farm.

A: Yes.

Q: Did that really make sense to you?

A: Yeah.

Q: It did?

A: We didn't know any different.

Q: Where were there toilets?

A: Outhouses.

Q: Outhouses.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you could go, you could ask permission to go? Or just --

A: Well you -- you -- in the camp itself, you were able to go around and do whatever you do. I remember the -- being I was knowledgeable about plumbing, and mechanical, I was able to scrounge around piping and drill a well -- I **knocked** a well down for water,

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

because we had no water. And I -- apparently they gave us some s -- material to drive a well down, and get water. But we didn't -- you know, I was -- I was the lead guy on -- on doing it, I was all about 15 - 16 years old.

Q: That's pretty important.

A: Yeah. And we got water.

Q: Wow. So you became the sort of hero of this group, I would imagine, sort of.

A: Well, yeah.

Q: And what did you do about change of clothes? Did -- there was no place to wash clothes, so you wore the same clothes [**indecipherable**]

A: We wore the same clothes. You just had no idea what was happening --

Q: Right.

A: Just lived day by day.

Q: Did -- did you notice people changing, and people get nervous --

A: Yes.

Q: -- excited --

A: Yes.

Q: -- arguments?

A: There wasn't too many arguments, there were -- there was some arguments, yes. But I -- it's -- what do you call it, a -- su -- couple of kids tried to run away, and they got caught, and they got beaten up, and -- but no -- you know, they were alive. Nobody died.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They didn't want to shake -- rattle the tree. They figured they'll take care of those Jews when they get to **Auschwitz**.

Q: [sneezes] Excuse me.

A: And they didn't want to have any rebellions, so they tried to be as quiet as -- you know, gentle as possible.

Q: So at some point -- let me ask you another question, was -- was there any mistreatment of women?

A: Yes.

Q: There was?

A: There were some young girls, they took them out one -- one evening, and they came back all disheveled, and all ragged, and stuff like -- I guess they raped them. And I don't know who, the Hungarians, or what, but a few young ladies, they were took out, and --

Q: But they didn't kill them?

A: No.

Q: They came back.

A: They came back.

Q: Were they crying, were they --

A: Yeah, they were very -- yes.

Q: They were -- so they were really upset?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes.

Q: And how many? Two, three, five, 10?

A: I would say about a half a dozen.

Q: Half a dozen.

A: The Hungarians raped them, or the Germans raped them, I don't know.

Q: Right, yeah. Did you -- did you know these girls?

A: A couple of them.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you talk with them?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: They wouldn't -- they wouldn't talk to anybody.

Q: Okay. Was there more than one ghetto in --

A: I -- I -- well, I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: I don't know.

Q: You only know the **Munkac** --

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean the -- the brick factory.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yeah, that the only one. I'm sure there were other sections [indecipherable]

Q: The day of your deportation, or the day before the deportation, did they announce to you that tomorrow you're going to go, or get up you're now going?

A: Get up and now you're going. Was a train pulled up. Cattle cars, you know, and -- and they pulled up, and all of a sudden, just move, get on there.

Q: And was the -- the entire ghetto, all of the people you were with put on these trains?

A: Well, part of it is because there were -- there were -- you couldn't put everybody in on the same train. And that's when they told us that we're going down to south of **Hungary** to give us land down there, there is a lot of land down there, and that's all it is is wild grassland, and we'll be developing that land and farming before -- before -- you know, before we get on that train.

Q: When you got on the train, were you with your mother and your two broth -- your two brothers?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So you were together in this cattle car?

A: Yes, and my grandmother also.

Q: And your grandfather, had he passed away?

A: Yes.

Q: He had. And your grandmother must be what, 50 - 60 years old?

A: No, she was about -- awa -- awa -- her 70's

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: In her 70's. So that two weeks in the ghetto for her must have been really tough.

A: Oh yeah, she was really going down the tubes.

Q: Mm-hm. And do you remember -- do you have an idea of how many people might have been on -- in the cattle cars? No?

A: I have no idea.

Q: No idea.

A: Was mobbed.

Q: Yes.

A: There was standing room only.

Q: Right.

A: Standing room only.

Q: And the trip was about how long do you think?

A: I would say maybe about two days.

Q: Two days.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, I think what we'll do is we'll stop the tape.

A: Okay.

Q: And go to the next tape.

End of Tape Two

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Beginning Tape Three

Q: **Alan**, I want to go back to the -- to the lumber business for just a second and ask you a question. Was there a mill --

A: Yes.

Q: Ca -- there was a mill?

A: There was a mill in town. That was the main industry over there.

Q: And is that the business with which your father was associated, or was --

A: No. Well, he used to ship lumber to the mill also, but he had nothing to do with the mill itself.

Q: I see, so --

A: But he would supply the mill with lumber.

Q: So he would -- they would make money by supplying the mill with lumber, would he also bring --

A: Well we -- he would contract out people to cut the lumber up in the forest, haul it down to the s -- train, and that -- the mill had it -- the long train, and that's how the mill would pick up the lumber, and he was responsible for making sure that the lumber was cut, and hauled down to the train.

Q: So then what was he -- wasn't he -- when he was killed, wasn't he driving something -
-

A: That was -- that was -- had nothing to do with lumber business.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: I see.

A: That was private, for the farm. You know --

Q: Oh, so bringing stuff back to the farm, so that you --

A: Yeah, you know those bean stalks?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Those poles? They went to the forest and get some bean stalks, you know, load it up because you know, we used to use them to -- you know, to go and that's how --

Q: I see.

A: It was tall, because was -- wasn't too heavy, and then the wagon hit a rock and just flipped over, and --

Q: Right, right. Okay. All right, now we'll go back to where we were, which was going on the train to **Auschwitz**, but you don't know that you're going to **Auschwitz**.

A: Correct.

Q: So you're -- you're in this train with lots of people, but we don't know how many in this car, right?

A: No.

Q: And do you think there are 10 cars, there are 20 cars [**indecipherable**]

A: I would say was about 15 - 20 cars.

Q: Uh-huh, okay. And what -- and is this a couple of days on the trip, or --

A: It too -- took a -- took about two nights.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Two nights. And what was this like to be in a car like that?

A: It was terrible, cause there was no food, no water, no toilet facilities, no nothing.

Q: And you had to stand?

A: You had to stand. And a lot of elderly people didn't make it.

Q: So people died on that.

A: On that, yes.

Q: And when they died, did you move them, or did they just -- wherever they died, they just stayed there.

A: They just stayed there. Just stayed there until we got into **Auschwitz**.

Q: So the smell must have been horrible in that car.

A: Yes.

Q: Was there a lot of noise?

A: Yeah, there was a lot of crying going on.

Q: And **Moishe** is what, about 10?

A: He was about 10 years old that time.

Q: And -- and how is he doing?

A: He was okay, he was --

Q: He was --

A: -- yeah, he -- he was okay. My mother was okay also. My grandmother was the one who didn't do so well, but she survived the train.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: She survived the trip?

A: She did survive.

Q: Did you come when it was dark to **Auschwitz**, or was it light?

A: It was early in the morning.

Q: Early morning.

A: Still -- still dark.

Q: And so somebody opens the door.

A: Yeah, was the -- I believe the **SS** opened the door. With dogs, everybody had a dog, and started to scream, and pushing people around, and get them lined up.

Q: Do you realize then that you're not in **Hungary**?

A: Oh -- oh yes.

Q: At that moment you did?

A: At that momen -- moment we knew we are -- we are in trouble.

Q: Because of their brutality?

A: That's right.

Q: Uh-huh. So di -- do you remember your body tensing up when you --

A: No, no, no, no, no, it was just what's going to happen now. So --

Q: And everybody, as far as you know, that goes on this train trip, is as ignorant about what's going to happen as you are?

A: Correct. Nobody knew anything.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: So nobody knows anything. So you get -- do they push you off the train?

A: No.

Q: No, they just yell at you?

A: No, they just kept -- they -- they had what do you call it, sticks, and kept hollering, you know, hitting on the walls, a -- **raus, raus, raus.**

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: You know, and that -- well, that means get out, get out, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- and people were kind of jumping off it, you know.

Q: There are no stairs, right? You jump off the train?

A: Was -- no. Was a kind of a small platform, so you can get off and go to --

Q: And your grandma got off okay?

A: Yes.

Q: And do they separate men and women?

A: They separated women and small children, and old men. People really old wa --

Q: And the old people, old men and women.

A: Well they p -- actually, there was a guy there, the **SS** guy standing over there, he says, you go here, here, here, here, here. And he was the guy decided who goes where.

Q: And so are you immediately split up from your mother and grandmother?

A: Yes, right in that line. My mother and my grandmother and my brother **Moishe.**

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: **Moishe**, the youngest.

A: And **David** and I, we were -- because we were all -- both, you know, still str -- you -- you know, strong and healthy.

Q: And did -- did you say why you -- did anybody say something, why are you -- why --

A: Yeah, you could --

Q: You couldn't say --

A: You couldn't say any -- you couldn't say anything. Was such a tumult over there, you know, so -- such a mass confusion. And some of the **SS** screaming. The **SS**, and people, and -- so --

Q: What do you see physically -- not just the people -- and you must see some prisoners, are --

A: Yes.

Q: -- are there some men who come to take **[indecipherable]**

A: No, the men didn't come out at all, I don't know. Once -- once you are in, once you pass the tattoo, and the haircut, and your clothes, take off all your clothes, and you get --

Q: That's when you see prisoners.

A: That's when you start to see prisoners.

Q: All right, so then besides the **SS**, who are yelling at you and pointing to go in one direction or another, do you see this camp? Do you see what it looks like?

A: Yes, oh yeah, you see the camp.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Do you see barbed wire?

A: Yes.

Q: What do you see?

A: You see the barbed wire, you see people in what do you call the un -- it wa -- camp uniforms, striped uniforms, and they weren't too gentle either, these -- these people were already seasoned veterans down there, and they -- they were kind of a little bit on the rough side also. So nobody was too gentle over there, once you get in there.

Q: What did you think when you saw barbed wire? Nothing.

A: No.

Q: You didn't know what to think.

A: You didn't -- what do you think, what do you do, you know, you -- you see the people you come in with, and well, like the **shochet** over there, you know, he had a long beard, and pious and stuff like that, and he -- all of a sudden you don't even recognize him because without the -- we never saw him without a beard or anything else. And you don't know what to say or what to do.

Q: So do you see your mother and grandmother and **Moishe** walking away?

A: Walking away, yes.

Q: And that's the last time you see them?

A: That's the last time I saw them. And I had no idea what was happening to them --

Q: Right.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: -- until the day I saw later one of the old-timers over there, who was telling us what they do. That's when we realized --

Q: What was really going on.

A: What was happening.

Q: Do you find this out after you registered?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes. So then they go away, and you don't know anything, you're just

[indecipherable]

A: I don't know anything.

Q: And do they even lie to you about this, do they say they're bringing them to a special pla --

A: No, they didn't say anything.

Q: They didn't say anything?

A: They didn't say anything, just go this way, go this way.

Q: Okay. So then you're brought into the camp to be registered immediately, or not?

A: Yes.

Q: You are.

A: You're brought in and you -- what do you call it --

Q: You're shaved?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: -- you're tattooed, you got shaved, you know, all the hair. If you had a beard, you got the beard cut off.

Q: But your whole body is shaved.

A: Our whole body is.

Q: And you've wai --

A: And your clothes was taken off, everything.

Q: Right. And what do they shave your body with?

A: A lo -- ju -- just the hair -- head.

Q: Just your head.

A: Just the head, nothing else.

Q: And who shaves you, prisoners?

A: The prisoners.

Q: Do they talk to you? A little bit?

A: Yeah, yeah, but th-they wouldn't say very much. They just said sarcastically, welcome to the world..

Q: Welcome to the world.

A: Something like that, yeah. Something like that.

Q: And you don't innocently say, what -- what's going on here? You don't say anything.

A: No you -- no, you don't say nothing. You -- and the-they -- they wouldn't tell you anything either, there.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Right.

A: So.

Q: And do you get tattooed after you're shaved?

A: I got tattooed first.

Q: You get -- first, before you're shaved?

A: Before I'm shaved, yes, the first thing they do is tattoo you.

Q: Did it hurt?

A: No, not really?

Q: Was it strange? I mean, you're used to branding cattle, right? You branded cattle?

A: No.

Q: Oh, you never did in the farm?

A: No.

Q: You never touched them.

A: No.

Q: So this is even --

A: You know, you're just there, and y-you are in such a daze, you -- you really don't know what's happening to you --

Q: Right.

A: -- all of a sudden.

Q: And what was your number -- what is your number?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: **A4470**. The **A** actually was the hun -- the latest Hungarian transport.

Q: But you're the low -- the low end --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- of that. Cause you're one of the first transports.

A: Correct.

Q: Right. Okay, so you get tattooed, then you get shaved, then they give you prisoner uniforms?

A: Yes.

Q: And so what do you get, striped pants?

A: Striped pants and jacket.

Q: And a cap?

A: And -- and a cap and -- and wooden shoes. Not wooden shoes, but shoes with wooden soles, and cloth ta -- a -- a -- a -- a -- tops.

Q: Really? That tie? The tops tie, or just --

A: I -- I -- let me tell you, I don't remember.

Q: So I'm just wondering how they would keep on your feet.

A: I -- I don't remem -- I think they were tie, I don't remember.

Q: Did they fit you?

A: Yeah.

Q: They did. So you didn't get blisters?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: No.

Q: Did you have socks?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No socks, no underpants, no underwear, you -- no nothing.

Q: No nothing.

A: Just the --

Q: I guess it was lucky it was May.

A: Yeah.

Q: Although it can be chilly in May in po -- **Poland**.

A: Well, we were there in wintertime, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- we had to stand **appel**, and let me tell you, it was cold. And if they didn't like something, you stood there until you fro -- hell froze over.

Q: Right. So the same -- the same day that you get there, you are registered, with a tattoo, and your uniform, and you go into a barrack?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember where the barrack was? Are you in **Birkenau**, or are you in **Auschwitz**?

A: **Auschwitz**.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: **Auschwitz I.** Work building?

A: Ye -- no, was barracks.

Q: Barracks meaning wood?

A: Yeah. I o -- I-I sha -- really, I --

Q: You don't re -- you don't know.

A: I don't remember for sure. I don't remember for --

Q: And are you with the people in the barrack who had been there before, or only --

A: Only there was all -- all the new arrivals. And we -- I wasn't there too long.

Q: How long do you think?

A: I was there about a day and a half.

Q: That's all?

A: That's all.

Q: Were you also registered -- a -- did -- did someone ask you questions, and write down something on a card, including what your occupation was?

A: Yeah, somebody was asking questions, and -- where are you from and all that stuff.

The Germans were very efficient in making sure they got all the information.

Q: [indecipherable]. So did they want to know what your occupation was?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: I was still young then.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: But you had -- you had worked -- so you could have said something, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you could have said something, right? So what happened? You're in the barracks for a couple of days, did they feed you?

A: I -- some soup.

Q: Soup?

A: Yeah, that bowl -- they gave you a bowl, and you stood in line there, and you got a -- a once a day, you got a bowl of soup and bread. One piece of br -- dry bread, nothing else.

Q: Did anything taste good?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Was watered down [**indecipherable**]

Q: Now **David** is with you in the barrack --

A: Correct.

Q: -- for those couple of days.

A: Is -- is a day and a half.

Q: And then what happens? Then you get s --

A: Then -- then they pointed out that I should go a different way. So they put us on a truck and took us to **Jawischowitz**.

Q: Do you want to stay with **David**?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes, but you have no choice. They [**indecipherable**] to tell you, no. You don't ask too many questions because if you do, you get hit.

Q: Okay. So you very quickly learned?

A: Yes.

Q: [**indecipherable**]. And **David** didn't yell and say I want to go with him, nothing.

A: No, no.

Q: Okay, so you get to **Jawischowitz**, which is a sub-camp of **Auschwitz** --

A: Correct.

Q: -- yeah? And what -- what happens there?

A: Well there they put us in barracks, was just one truckload, put us in barracks, and that was in the afternoon, and that night went on the night shift, midnight in the coal mines.

Q: And you never worked in a coal mine before?

A: No.

Q: Now, of course this is a stupid question, but did they train you?

A: Are you kidding?

Q: [**indecipherable**]

A: It was -- you worked with the guy who was Polish, and he was the lead guy, and all you did -- all -- he did everything but shovel coal, and the prisoners were shoveling coal.

So [**indecipherable**]

Q: That's all you did.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: That's all you did is shovel coal. You would drill and, you know, put dynamite in and blow up [indecipherable] keep going, blow it up, and when it -- when the what do you call it, dynamite blew up, was a -- a bunch of coal, and you went to shovel that coal in -- into carts.

Q: How was it lit down there, did you have the -- this hat on your head with a light on it?

A: Yes.

Q: And it was on your head?

A: Yes.

Q: And could you stand up in the coal mine, or did you have to --

A: You have to kind of on a bending position.

Q: Uh-huh. Was it hard to work that?

A: Yes it was.

Q: When you were --

A: We keep shoveling, you had -- you know, these guys had to produce a certain amount of coal, and it was different tunnels that people was going in, and you worked there.

Q: Pretty dangerous too.

A: Oh yes.

Q: There must have been collapses.

A: There were a couple of collapses.

Q: Anywhere where you -- where it was near you?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: No, not when I was -- you know, but the -- different shifts, different areas.

Q: Were you stronger than a lot of people who --

A: Yes, ye --

Q: -- were in these mines because you'd worked manually?

A: Yes, yeah I was -- I was very strong, and I was able to survive very well in the coal mine, even though the food was kind of poor.

Q: Right.

A: Every day you got coffee and a piece of bread in the morning, and soup in the after -- in the evening.

Q: That's it, no lunch?

A: That's it, no lunch.

Q: Sounds almost impossible to survive on that --

A: Well you do.

Q: -- and do that kind of work.

A: You do. Let me tell you, you -- I have no idea how much punishment a body can take.

Q: Hm. Until you're forced into it.

A: Until you're forced into it.

Q: So do you find out about your mother and **Moishe** and your grandmother in **Jawischowitz** or before?

A: Before. The next day, actually.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: The next day?

A: That's -- here you were, what you -- one of the old-timers, you see the smoke over there? That's the people who went on the other line. So I knew right away what happened.

Q: What happened to you when you heard that?

A: What are you gonna do, you just --

Q: There's nothing you can do.

A: Nothing you can do.

Q: Did you want to die?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. We always -- we always fight to go on. And you'd be surprised the will to live, how strong it is. And at it's worst times, you know, you still want to go on and live.

Q: And **David** -- did you tell **David**, or did he share it from **[indecipherable]**

A: Oh he -- he knew also. He heard, because we were together.

Q: And did he respond the same as you?

A: Yeah.

Q: You're just gonna go on?

A: You just got to go on.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Not easy. How were the guards with you in **Jawischowitz**, were they very brutal, the **kapos** and the guards?

A: The **kapos** were sometimes worse than the gar -- than the **SS**. The **SS** didn't get involved too much, only if somebody stepped out of line, then they came in and they really beat you to a pulp. But the **kapos** wasn't too gentle either. The **kapos** are mostly German Jews, prisoners. And they -- they had certain privileges over there, and if a young boy came in, they would have him their house boy. I guess they used them for sex and everything else, so --

Q: Ho -- did -- did you know these were German Jews, not just German?

A: Yeah.

Q: The **kapos**, they were German Jews?

A: They were German Jews. They -- they were brutal, most of them.

Q: And did you sm-- you assumed that these young boys were being used sexually?

A: Well, we knew.

Q: You knew?

A: We knew. But if the **kapo** stepped out of line, the Germans took care of.

Q: And what would it mean to step out of line for those people, do you think?

A: I -- if he -- I -- I don't know how to tell you, but if he didn't follow their rules, you know, gave s -- gave somebody leniency or so -- we -- you know, lenient with something or somebody, then it -- because he was walking -- always walking around with a rubber

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

hose about **yay** long, and if you stepped out of line, or he didn't like you, or whatever, he give you a whack over the shoulders, or over the head, that -- no mercy.

Q: So th -- in order for them to survive --

A: They had to --

Q: -- they had to be brutal.

A: -- brutal.

Q: Did you understand that then?

A: No.

Q: Do you understand it now?

A: Yes, I understand it now.

Q: You do? Would you have become a **kapo** do you think

A: No.

Q: Did you have a chan -- you wouldn't have done it?

A: No.

Q: So in a certain way you don't understand this.

A: You try to survive, you try to -- not -- try not to cross the line because you saw somebody who crossed the line of any way possible. And was no mercy. And if they had **appel -- appel** was, you know, a roll call, and somebody was missing, you stood there until that person showed up, and freeze your butt off. And then whoever showed up late, God help you.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Mm. Did you --

A: Because the German -- the -- the Gestapo would take the roll call. They would go, you know, call out your name, and --

Q: Do you recall about how long you would have to stand in roll call?

A: Most of the time it was about a half hour.

Q: So it wasn't that --

A: Wasn't that bad.

Q: -- but it's pretty cold.

A: But you -- you worked all night long.

Q: Yeah.

A: You worked all night long, so, you know, you were kind of tired, and at eight o'clock was **appel**, you know? And you came in, the first thing you had to do was take a shower, because you were all full of coal dust. And you went to sleep, where it was on a bunk, and -- and that was it.

Q: So you were able to take a shower every day?

A: Ye -- after you come back from the coal mines.

Q: With soap?

A: Yes.

Q: Really, but -- and how did you dry yourself? Was there actually a towel?

A: Well, re -- it's kind of a rag, that -- you know.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And the showers were large, group showers, I would imagine.

A: Group showers, correct.

Q: Right.

A: And toilet facility was latrines.

Q: Mm-hm. Did you have to go outside the barrack for that?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you able to sleep?

A: Yes.

Q: You could sleep. Was it very noisy?

A: We were tired.

Q: You were tired.

A: Real tired [**indecipherable**] you know -- you know, y-you -- you put your head down you went out like the light, and all of a sudden, **appel, appel, appel**, you know, you get to your feet, and -- a-and you gotta get out and --

Q: Did you have dreams, bad dreams?

A: I don't remember.

Q: You don't remember?

A: I don't remember.

Q: You don't remember nightmares?

A: No.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And were you sleeping alone on a bunk, or were you [indecipherable]

A: Oh no, no, no, no, no, no. It was a section would say about six feet or so, and four people in a section.

Q: So were you friends with these people?

A: No.

Q: No. Did you have any friends?

A: Yes.

Q: Who?

A: As a matter of fact, I had some friends I'm still seeing.

Q: Really?

A: All from over there. One specifically, and he s -- he lives in **New Jersey**, and we remained friends, and the families, the kids and all that, throughout you know, all these years.

Q: And -- and ho-how would you find a friend, and what would it mean to have a friend in that circumstance? It was --

A: Well, you just have somebody to talk to, somebody, you know, who was talk ab -- it didn't mean anything except you had somebody to confide in, and somebody to talk to, and that's about it, that's what a friend was.

Q: And what did you talk about?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: About how ya -- how your Polish leader treated you, and who got beaten up, and who got killed, and if you were sick you didn't dare to go to the infirmary because then they take you to **Auschwitz**, and that was it. So --

Q: So it was a very practical kind of conversation about what was --what was actually happening.

A: Correct, yeah. Who -- you know, who got -- who was sick, and then who got beaten up, and -- and try -- kind of tried to stay out of l -- out of the way, you know?

Q: **Alan**, tell me something. Now you knew that the Germans were murdering Jews in **Auschwitz**. Did you also have a sense that they were murdering Jews all over **Europe**?

A: Mm.

Q: Or did you -- did you only think about this particular --

A: That time we knew that Jews are being killed all over.

Q: All over. Because you're meeting Jews who are coming from other places?

A: Yeah, from all over [**indecipherable**] a lot of Polish Jews, and -- and they -- they are the ones who are telling the horror stories, whoever survived. This friend of mine, he was a Polish Jew, you know, and he was there about a year before me.

Q: What was his -- what's his name?

A: **Morrie Goldfinger**.

Q: And he was from **Poland**?

A: He's from **Poland**.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Are you also hearing rumors about the war?

A: Yes. Well, in camp, the rumors were going around, and you know I was there, the war goes on, and all of a sudden we heard that the Russians are mo -- the Russian front is moving down, and how we knew that it's really getting close, one Sunday, when the coal mines weren't -- the coal mines were working, but in our free time, they take us out to dig ditches, for the army to, you know, to dig in. And that's how we knew that the war is really getting close. As a matter of fact, while we were digging -- digging ditches, they also had beer that we had -- were able to drink.

Q: Beer?

A: Beer, yes. That was a shock. Beer was our -- it was part -- it wasn't part on the coal mine, we had -- still had to go to the coal mine at night. But in daytime, they took you to dig these ditches for the army. And the **SS** were there, you know, trying to push you.

Q: So you had two shifts, you were digging ditches on one shift, and then you were going --

A: Yes.

Q: -- at night. So you're even more tired than --

A: That's right.

Q: Right?

A: That's right.

Q: Did -- did people get sick?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes.

Q: People died?

A: Yes.

Q: Were there -- was there --

A: Well, every day you see somebody being carrying out, or some -- every day, well it became such a thing that it didn't mean anything. Was a way of life, you know, people die, and you -- you take them out, and wa -- whatever happens. They take them to **Auschwitz** or whatever, and that's it. And like I said, is if you got sick, forget about it. That's -- that ha -- that'll be the last of you.

Q: Did the Germans kill people, that you saw?

A: The only time they would shoot at them is i-if you run towards the fence. Yeah, it was electrified fence, and before you hit the fence, they shot you. Some people did it, they just committed suicide.

Q: Did you ever think of --

A: They couldn't take it.

Q: You didn't -- you never thought --

A: No, I never thought about it [**indecipherable**]

Q: How big was this sub-camp, do you know? 2000 people, or less than that, or --

A: I would say that -- maybe less. I -- I would say about a thousand people in there.

Q: So not -- not huge?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: It wasn't a huge camp, no.

Q: And what was this coal being used for? Do you have any idea?

A: Well they were loading it up on trains, shipping it to **Germany**, you know.

Q: To **Germany**.

A: Was a big, you know, work in there. Piles and piles of coal.

Q: So you're in ya --

A: **Jawischowitz**.

Q: **Jawischowitz**, from May until January.

A: Yes.

Q: May '44 until January '45?

A: Correct.

Q: Right. And I think what we'll do is we'll just stop the tape.

End of Tape Three

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Beginning Tape Four

Q: **Alan**, did you ever hear the word **musselman**?

A: Yes.

Q: What did it -- what did that mean?

A: **Musselman** was a person who was all emaciated, and ready to -- ready for the heap.

Q: Do you know the derivation of that word, where it comes from?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. The funny -- I say the funny part, the sad part of it, you know, what do you call it, people in the camp used to make fun if somebody was going down to that point, it -- you're a **musselman**, and didn't want to have anything to do with you any more. That means you were -- that's h -- that's how it be -- that's how cruel we became, you know? You're a **musselman**, and that means you are ready to go for the heap. You're not going to be around too long.

Q: So people would avoid that person --

A: Correct.

Q: -- and not even -- not help them.

A: No.

Q: Would there be any way to help those people, could you --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: N -- [indecipherable] was there -- what are you going to -- you can't give them food, you can't give them anything, except just see them go down the tubes.

Q: Do you think you changed during those months, as a human being?

A: I ch -- maybe I -- I wa -- I became a little rougher.

Q: Rougher?

A: I mean, less perp -- less sympathetic. But that -- that went away after the war.

Q: You came back to --

A: You came back, and you became a human being after.

Q: Did -- did you guys, when you were working the coal mines, and when you would come back to the barrack, did you talk about food? Would that be a part of your conversation?

A: It was always talked about, food.

Q: Oh.

A: Always talked about food.

Q: And th -- what would be the talk about food, would you --

A: Well what -- I th -- sometimes -- and I -- I was one of them, you know. I developed a relationship with a Polish guy who was in charge over there. And we would sit down and eat, li -- no, he would sit down and eat lunch, and I would stare at him, so he would give me part of his food.

Q: Really?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yeah. And that helped tremendously, was a little additional nourishment.

Q: And why would he do that?

A: Well, he knew I -- I wasn't a rich kid, and he knew I -- you know, I -- I was able to converse with him, and I wasn't a wise guy, so he kind of felt sorry for me.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: **Jaszek.**

Q: **Jaszek.**

A: So --

Q: So he was kind, and swe --

A: He was -- he wasn't too bad, you know, he was -- he made me work, but -- because he had to pul -- you know, he had to produce. But when he would sit down and -- to eat lunch, and I had a chance to sit down for five minutes or so, and he would say, "Here, have a piece." So -- or sometimes he would bring a little bit extra and give me a pr -- give me something.

Q: Did you have to w -- to work for him at doing something in order to get this --

A: No, just to do my job.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But we would talk you know, as to where I come from, or what I did, and stuff like that. He was little more -- a little sympathetic, you know? So --

Q: Was he much older than you?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: He was -- I always say he was in his 30's -- late 30's, early 40's.

Q: So -- could have been your father?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Given how young you were.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: So -- and then you come back, you know, this so and so had a little extra food today, you know, and sometimes somebody would steal somebody's food. There's a ration. And that was a -- that was a big no-no, you know, if you did that, and whoever finds out that who did it, you got into a fight in. So, it was a bad -- you know, a bad situation.

Q: You -- you were mentioning that there were young boys who were -- became sort of houseboys to some of the **kapos** --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- the German Jewish **kapos**.

A: There's only one **kapo** there in this camp [**indecipherable**] camp, yeah.

Q: In that camp at [**indecipherable**]

A: And a --

Q: Whi --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: This kid, he came from **Romania**, he was maybe a year younger than I was, and he was a real cute little boy. And he wound up in this **kapos** office, to do his houseboy. And the Germans allowed it, I guess.

Q: Did you -- did you notice that friendships turned into sexual relationships between the men there?

A: No.

Q: You didn't see that?

A: No. Was no -- was no desire, you know, no urge, sexual urge, because you know, it just -- you worked, and you slept, and you just survived.

Q: Right. Were you taken from ya -- **Jawischowitz**, back to **Auschwitz** bef --

A: No.

Q: So, when you were marched out -- you were marched out of **Jawischowitz** in order to leave the ha --

A: To a train station.

Q: To a train station.

A: Yeah, it was a train station, was I -- I guess pretty far away, because it was two -- two nights and one day that you --

Q: Of walking?

A: Walking.

Q: So this was very cold, this is January 18th? So it's --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: It was snowing.

Q: Yeah.

A: It wa -- we were walking in the snow, and the snow was coming down like a dickens, and we had that skimpy clothes.

Q: And still those -- those wooden soled shoe --

A: Wooden sole -- wooden sole shoes and the --

Q: No socks, no underwear.

A: That's -- oh no, was nothing.

Q: Did you have a hat, cap?

A: We had the cap, yeah -- what do you call it -- camp -- that they supplied you with the caps.

Q: So how did you -- how di -- how does one survive in a situation like this?

A: Well, let me tell you, at nighttime, while I was -- what do you call it, we had to stop and lay down. I -- I buried myself in the snow. And I fe -- you know, because snow is a -- I was smart enough to know that snow is an insulator. And I slept outside --

Q: In the snow?

A: In the snow.

Q: It's an insulator? Really?

A: Definitely, snow is an insulator. So was protected from the cold.

Q: Did you -- did you just burrow yourself in like --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes.

Q: Alone?

A: Yes.

Q: And what did other people do, they slept on top?

A: They slept on top, and a --

Q: And froze?

A: -- and froze to -- a lot of them froze to death. A lot of them couldn't walk because a really hard walking, the snow is deep and you were marching, it's nighttime. If you fell down already [**indecipherable**] just boom.

Q: They shoot you.

A: They shoot you right there and let you lay there. Nothing.

Q: Were you getting weaker, or were you still okay?

A: I was still pretty good. I got weaker once I got off that train. Lying there [**indecipherable**] train in the cold without any food or anything else, and got to **Buchenwald**. That's when I felt -- started to feel a little weaker.

Q: Mm-hm. So you're marching for two nights and a day, and then you get on a train.

A: Get on a train.

Q: With -- an open car train, though, this is not a cattle car, open --

A: There's [**indecipherable**] open, you know --

Q: This is an open --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: -- open car. Where the --

Q: So -- so the weather is very close to you.

A: It's cold -- is -- it's bitter cold, and you -- what you did is each snow [indecipherable] water, and when you got to **Buchenwald**, the first thing they did is give you a hot shower.

Q: Really? Does it -- that feel good?

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Q: With soap, also?

A: I don't even bel -- yeah, soap was always plentiful, but ye --

Q: Really?

A: -- there was -- they would say, you know, they use the soap from the bodies.

Q: Oh.

A: So, what can I tell you? There's always soap around.

Q: And did you have a towel there too, and wipe yourself, or you didn't have a towel?

A: No, no I don't think so.

Q: You don't think so.

A: You just dried off.

Q: And did you get clean clothes, or they give you back your old clothes?

A: Give you -- give you clean clothes.

Q: They did? So what was -- wait -- what was **Buchenwald** like?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Well, buchenw -- I was in **Buchenwald** only one day.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, th-that time we got in there early in the morning, and that afternoon they were taking me to **Krawinkle**. In **Krawinkle** we got into barracks, and next morning, on the tr -- on a truck to the stone quarries. They were digging tunnels for the army to store ammunition.

Q: Quarries un -- underground?

A: Tunnels, yeah.

Q: Tunnels underground.

A: Yeah.

Q: **Krawinkle**. That's **c-r-a-w** --

A: **K-r**.

Q: **K-r-a** --

A: -- **w-i-n-k-l-e**.

Q: So what is that work like for you?

A: It was brutal.

Q: Worse than the coal mines?

A: First of all, part of my hand was frozen, was oozing. My right foot, the toes were oozing. S -- and I was much weaker, and --

Q: You had pus on your --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes.

Q: -- I mean, you had an open wound?

A: Yes. And my toes also. And the work was much harder than coal because stone is heavier, and you had to shovel, and sho -- shovel into trucks. So the work was much harder, so I didn't last there very long. I lasted -- I don't remember, a few days or a few weeks, or wa -- I think it was like maybe a few weeks. And they were -- they took me to this place where they said, you know, that was the end of you. And in the morning -- you got up in the morning, and y -- on both sides were dead people. There's a guy over there walking around looking at your mouth, and knocking your teeth, if you had a golden tooth, you know, so -- and they were able to survive, by the Germans, you know, on getting some extra rations. We're giving the Germans the gold.

Q: So you were -- you were laying there, and wanted to die, th --

A: That's right, yeah.

Q: So were you then a -- a **musselman** as far as they were concerned?

A: I just -- I would say yes, I was a **musselman** by that time. And then all of a sudden the Americans were approaching. So, they didn't want anybody to see that, so they put us in trucks and took us to **Buchenwald**.

Q: Uh-huh, but you were -- was this place that they put you in, in **Krawinkle**? Or do you think it was in --

A: Well, this --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: -- an-another place altogether?

A: Another -- another town.

Q: Another town.

A: And I don't -- I don't even remember a name over the writing, because I was --

Q: Right.

A: -- at this point, I was almost delirious.

Q: But you are in **Buchenwald**, and then **Krawinkle**, from January until April.

A: Yes.

Q: January, February, March, that's four months --

A: Well, back and forth.

Q: Back and forth.

A: Yeah. I don't know how long I stayed in **Krawinkle**, I don't know how long I --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I know where that place where they took you back to die actually. I was there only about a week or so.

Q: Before the Americans came?

A: Before the Americans [**indecipherable**]

Q: So you must have lasted longer in **Krawinkle** than you may think?

A: Yeah. Yes.

Q: Did you get typhus?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: I got typhus after liberation.

Q: After liberation.

A: That's right.

Q: So were you -- did they take you away from **Krawinkle**, and the stone quarries because you were collapsing, wha -- I mean --

A: I was weak, I was weak.

Q: Because you were weak.

A: You know, my hand was an open wound ru -- and my feet were open wounds, you know --

Q: Right.

A: -- and I was weak, I couldn't shovel the snow in -- in -- the rocks any more, so they took me away.

Q: Mm-hm. Had you lost a lot of weight?

A: Oh yeah, I was skin and bones by that time.

Q: Really? So it must have been really hard, because you have been strong --

A: Yes.

Q: -- throughout the whole period, so --

A: That's right, but this time -- this time I was going down the tubes in a hurry.

Q: And what happened to your friend?

A: I don't know, we got separated.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I -- I -- but -- then we -- I met him after -- in **Buchenwald** after the Americans got there. But we got to **Buchenwald**, and right away started to take out prisoners out in the fields and shooting them. And this guy I was with over there in the barracks, h -- I was way, way in the back of the barracks. When they came into our barracks, he hid me and himself underneath. So we didn't -- didn't get pulled out.

Q: And his name was **Janek**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was it --

A: Yeah, **Janek**, and after -- and we were friends for years after. You know, he wound up also in **Switzerland**, and --

Q: What's -- what was his full name, do you remember?

A: **Henry -- hen -- actually, Jainer.**

Q: **Jainer**?

A: **Henry Jainer.**

Q: So he just pushed you under a bunk?

A: Yeah, with himself.

Q: With himself. Was he about your age, or he was older?

A: Yeah, he was my age --

Q: Uh-huh.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: -- he was about my age, but he was a little stronger. One of the --

Q: And --

A: I don't know what camp he was, but he was a little -- all sorts going on

[indecipherable]

Q: A little stronger?

A: -- better shape than I was.

Q: Right. And they didn't come into that barrack, they weren't looking --

A: They came in, but they didn't look underneath.

Q: I see.

A: They just, out, **raus, raus, raus**, everybody **raus. Jader raus, Jader raus**. And we were hiding underneath there, and they were shouting from -- they didn't go underneath the bunks, or on top of the bunks, they just --

Q: Just yelled.

A: Just yelled **raus**.

Q: And you could hear the -- you could hear gunshots?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Did you know it was the Americans?

A: Yes. The rumors were that the Americans had come.

Q: That was the rumor, I see.

A: Yes.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: So I guess you must have been, if you were pray -- if you were a prayerful person, you must have been praying that they come pretty fast.

A: Yeah. Many times we said **Shema [indecipherable]**

Q: Did you?

A: But nobody listened.

Q: Until it was almost too late.

A: Mm.

Q: Did you remain religious during that period, in some way?

A: No.

Q: No. Did you lose your faith, do you think?

A: To I -- I'm not as religious, I -- I was when I was a kid.

Q: And is -- do you think that's a result of what you experienced?

A: Well, you s -- you see what's going on in the world, you say to yourself, if there is a God, where is He? So -- I -- I -- you know, I believe in God, basically, you know, you have to believe into something. I practice Judaism, I by -- I am a member of a synagogue and all that, but that's about all.

Q: Right. Do you remember when the Americans came?

A: Yes.

Q: What was that like?

A: May the 11th.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: '45.

A: Mm.

Q: Was it chaotic?

A: People were walking around in daze. A-And there was no way [**indecipherable**] there was just [**indecipherable**]. And the Americans thought they were so smart, and they brought in barrels of pea soup with ham, and bacon, and pork and all that stuff, and a thick soup, and a lot of people -- th-they didn't realize that these people are sick people, their stomach is, you know, just about dried up. And they ate that, a lot of them got dysentery and died. So then all of a sudden they changed everything, and started to bring in some lighter food, and stuff like that.

Q: Did you eat that s -- pea soup?

A: I had a little bit. I didn't have too much because I couldn't eat, you know. But then I started -- and then they started to bring in different food, and I started to eat, and couple dis -- days later, I was -- I -- I got sick, and they took me -- they took me to a hospital. And that's all I remember. And then I was on a -- w-wound up in a -- in an apartment in **Weimar**, which was in the city next to **Buchenwald**, and started to recuperate, and some guys came over to me, said, "How you doing?" I says, "I -- I -- I guess I'm doing okay, I don't know." And th-they tol -- the doctor told me that I had typhus. And they bring me to an a -- brought me to an apartment, and actually pro -- wa-wandering aimlessly. Nobody knew what to do and what -- where to go, and the Czech consulate came over,

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

and they said, "Do you want to go back home?" And I said no. I said, "I don't want to go back." So he says, "Okay, but where do you want to go?" I said, "I don't know." And then we heard there's a -- a Rabbi **Schechter** is organizing a group of 17 and under, and take -- going to **Switzerland**. So I went to register, and I was accepted. And that's how I wound up in **Switzerland**.

Q: **Switzerland**. Well, let me just ask you, those first couple of days in **Buchenwald**, before you got sick, do you -- do you re -- recall being there when the Americans come in and they start giving you food?

A: Yes. I do recall it, yes, I do recall that.

Q: Were there any Germans left, or tha -- had they all just left?

A: The Germans were all gone.

Q: They were all gone?

A: All gone. A lot of them were caught, a lot of them were caught. And then they put on **[indecipherable]** to show them what was going on, you know. We didn't know, we didn't know. Well -- well -- how did that happen, blah, blah, blah. So they made them dig trenches and bury the dead. Cause there was loads and loads of that.

Q: And do you remember seeing them?

A: Yes.

Q: **[coughs]** Excuse me. Was there any revenge against Germans who were caught, or against **kapos** that you saw?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes. People -- people who were able yet to do something, yes there was revenge. But not too many people were able-bodied to do anything.

Q: And what did they do, the ones who were able-bodied?

A: Oh, they would beat him up and stuff like that, you know? And pointing fingers at them to the Americans, that he was a bad boy and stuff like that, you know.

Q: Did you want to beat up some of these people?

A: I was in no shape to do anything.

Q: Yeah, but -- no, no, I understand that.

A: Yeah.

Q: Would you have wanted to do it? Would you --

A: Yes.

Q: -- if you were strong enough, would you have done it?

A: Oh yes, yes. Oh yes, yes.

Q: You think it would have made you feel better?

A: I don't know. I do not know. But I think that that hatred was still in me, you know, why -- why would anybody do that to -- to people for n-no reason whatsoever?

Q: Right, right. How did they treat you for typhus?

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't know, you were just --

A: I was -- I was out.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: You were just out.

A: I was out, I had no idea, I was just --

Q: So you weren't in a hospital, you were in this apartment?

A: No, I was in a hospital.

Q: And then they put you in the apartment?

A: Then they put me in the apartment.

Q: I see. So do you know how long you were sick?

A: No.

Q: You don't

A: I have no idea.

Q: You know nothing.

A: I have no idea how long I was in that hospital, how long I was sick. All of a sudden I found myself -- somebody brought me up to the apartment, there was a couple other people in that apartment. Was a young girl there also. And I remember she didn't know how to boil an egg even, so I showed her how to boil an egg, and you know, stuff like that.

Q: Right.

A: So.

Q: So this -- but this was sort of -- n-nowhere and doing nothing. I mean it's just a place

A: That's right. You were wa --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: There was no direction.

A: No direction whatsoever. Until that transport was formed, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- going to **Switzerland**.

Q: So 17 of you went?

A: There was 350.

Q: 350? Did **Schechter** go also, or did he stay and --

A: What do you mean by tha --

Q: It's Rabbi **Schechter**, did he just --

A: No he ca -- he -- he went with a transport.

Q: I see.

A: He -- he was a -- a what do you call it, a rabbi -- official rabbi for the American army.

Q: I see. So did the

A: He was a captain.

Q: How did you travel, by train?

A: By train.

Q: This time you sat in benches?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: The normal train?

A: Normal -- like normal people.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And who paid for this, **Schechter**? The Americans?

A: The Americans, yeah.

Q: And where did you go?

A: Well, first we wound up in **Basel**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: **Basel** is a border town.

Q: Right.

A: And they put us in this holding barracks or whatever, to make sure everybody is okay, and if anybody has any disease of kind that was communicable disease. You know, some -- some people had **TB**, so they separated them, and they send them to **Davos** [**indecipherable**] which is a **TB** section. And the rest of us, after a day or so, were taken to **Zugerberg**. **Zugerberg** was a hotel like situ -- in the mountains. And we were there, and there they tried to get us back, they were -- into reality. Wa -- actually was even a priest over there to help, you know, settle down, and --

Q: A priest?

A: Priest.

Q: Did they have psychologists?

A: Ma -- yes, they had psychologists there.

Q: Really?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: They had nurses, and -- we ra -- they took us to get involved in a sport in the afternoon after lunch everybody had to go lay down and take a nap, to rest up, and -- and slowly, you know, you -- you got your strength back.

Q: W-Was this a month or two, or three [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, I would say about a month, about four weeks or so, yeah, we were up there.

Q: When do you hear -- you knew immediately that **Moishe** and your mother and grandmother were dead?

A: Correct.

Q: Yes. So you were not thinking that they could have survived?

A: No, no.

Q: When did you hear about **David**?

A: Well, it was a lot of information going back and forth, you know, the names, and all the organizations, and -- and then all of a sudden, I saw **David Heisler**, you know?

Q: His name?

A: His name. And --

Q: On a list?

A: On a list. And so I wrote back, and he responded, and we started to correspond.

Q: And where was he?

A: He was back home.

Q: So he decided to go back home?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yeah, well he got -- he got liberated by the Russians in January, '45.

Q: In **Auschwitz**?

A: You know, he was in a different camp.

Q: He was in a different -- I see.

A: He was in a different camp. I -- I -- he told me his name -- the name, but I don't remember. But he got liberated in January. So he went back home, and he went back to our house, somebody else was living there. And so they let him stay there provided he worked the fields. In our own house.

Q: And they knew who he was, of course.

A: Oh sure, they knew who he was. So, and the ru -- Russians, they took over, and it was a -- our land was becoming a -- part of a carho -- community farm, and -- because we didn't have just one piece of land over here, we had -- like they were giving out parcels of land there, developed land, and you bid for it, you know, and if you want it, and that's how we accumulated all that land. It didn't matter whether Jewish or not Jewish, or whatever, if you wanted to -- you had to farm it, you just couldn't get land and keep it, you had to farm it. And we did.

Q: Right. When you wrote to your brother, did you ask him to leave and to come over to the American side?

A: Yes.

Q: And -- and what did he say?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Th-They wouldn't let him go out.

Q: They wouldn't let him --

A: -- wouldn't let him -- my aunt was -- as a matter of fact, my mother's sister was -- h-
he moved in with her, she -- they had a house in **Munkac**, and they were able to get their
house back. But anything with a farm, the Russians took. So they got their house back, so
he lived there, and then he also had a big lot, so he built a house for himself, he got
married after, and had two little children. And when I left there -- I moved to the States,
they asked for medicine, and I -- I went to the pharmacist, and I told him the shu --
situation, he had some stomach problems, and what he needed, and he gave it to me, and
I would send it, wa -- a medicine.

Q: Did you -- when you both started writing to each other, write about what had
happened to each of you so --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- that you each knew --

A: Yes.

Q: -- the history?

A: Yes. We corresponded for quite awhile.

Q: I bet. So there was no way, of course, for you to see each other when you -- you --

A: No. No, that time was -- Russian were there, and --

Q: Right, right.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: -- he didn't -- he didn't dare go back because you -- you live there, they'll keep you there.

Q: Right.

A: So he didn't want to go back.

Q: Once you got a little better, so the -- what was the name of the place, the hotel where you were [indecipherable]

A: **Zugerberg**.

Q: **Suderberg**?

A: **Zugerberg**.

Q: **Zuger**?

A: **Zugerberg**

Q: **Zugerberg**. Were there people who were more political there? People who were Zionists, who were trying to get you to go to **Israel**?

A: No, no, no. No, no, no, not there yet, no that came later on.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: In **Zugerberg** was strictly recuperation.

Q: Okay.

A: Just leave me -- leave them alone, let them get better.

Q: Okay. So you're there for a few weeks?

A: For about a month.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: A month?

A: Or so. And --

Q: And then what happens?

A: And then, after that, we were taken down to **Baix**, and some of them went to **Lugano**, which was on the it -- Italian part, near the Italian border there. And that's how we -- most of us got separated.

Q: And what were you doing in **Baix**?

A: Nothing.

Q: Nothing.

A: In **Baix** you did nothing. You just learn how to sing Hebrew songs. I learned how to do the **Hora**. That's -- that's the main activity, nothing else. No school, no -- no teaching, no nothing.

Q: And who was teaching you these songs?

A: It was a -- it was isra --

Q: Isra -- people from **Palestine**?

A: Yeah, people -- people from **Palestine**.

Q: From the agency for pales -- the -- you -- the --

A: I guess so, the -- the Zionist -- Zionist group, yeah.

Q: And were they trying to get you to go to **Palestine**?

A: Yes.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And you didn't want to go?

A: Well, at that time, my -- I didn't know what I wanted, but I knew I wanted to do something besides sit there and doing the **Hora**, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- and singing he -- what do you call it, Hebrew songs.

Q: And you are 18 or 19 years old at this point?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes?

A: About 19 years old.

Q: I think we have to change the tape.

End of Tape Four

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Beginning Tape Five

Q: On the last tape you talked about going to **Geneva**. What -- do you remember approximately when, was it June, July or August of '45?

A: I -- I -- I would say it was closer to June.

Q: Closer to June. And -- and what were you going to do in **Geneva**?

A: Well, like I told you before, all we were doing is useless things, you're singing songs and all that. And there was a little synagogue in **Baix**, and I went down there, and I says, "Is there anything, any school that we could go to and do something?" So one guy comes over and he says, "Well, there is an **ORT** school in **Geneva**."

Q: **ORT**.

A: **ORT** school.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And there is a gentleman by the name of **Syngalowsky**, who is world president. He said we could go see him. Maybe we can do something for you. So I said okay, says, "Give me his address where he -- where his office is." So one Sunday morning, another guy and I said, "Well let's -- let's jump the train and si -- get down to **Geneva** and see, know -- you know, what we can do." So, we went down there, we got off the train, and we kept asking -- I had a little -- very little knowledge of French, and find the place, knocked on his door, and he said in English, "What do you want?" So I said, "Look," I said, "I came down here because we need help." He said, "What do you mean, what kind

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

of help?" And we were talking in Yiddish. And I told him, I says, "We are over there doing nothing, wasting our time. We are all survivors, and we would like to go to school." So, you know, we were talking back and forth, he said, "I'll tell you what. Here is the money, buy yourself a ticket, go back on the train, and I'll see what I can do." Two weeks later, we go into **Geneva**, about a dozen of us or so. And we go -- and we went, came down to **Geneva**, and there was a -- a house there, not far from the airport, and I don't remember the name, but there was other refugees, but these -- these were not survivors, these are people who during the war they ran away and this and that. And we were with them, and they were -- some of those went to work, and we went to work also, and we were introduced to a scu -- what do you call it, to the teachers over there, one of them was a Polish Jew, was a -- he was a math professor, he was really good. And then the shop f -- foreman, and we -- we went down there and started to learn. And a couple weeks later, they separated us from that group, and just the survivors got a place there, it was called **Hôme de Pregni**, right back of the United Nations building. And there they also had a psychologist, and they had a house mother, and we went to school, and started to learn. And I -- I requested to get a French tutor for me because I wanted to learn French in a hurry. And once I had a knowledge of conversational French, I decided to register -- it was for the fall semester, in the community college.

Q: Why did you want to learn French?

A: Because that was the language down there.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Uh-huh, okay, right.

A: And I think when you go to school down there, you have to learn how to speak French. And -- which I did. It was a little hard in the beginning, but I mastered the language pretty quick. I would s -- I was really -- a language I'm really fast to learn. And I went to school, and I still went -- and the tutor still was, you know, teaching me French, and in **ORT** I was doing very well. And I'll tell you, they really taught us basics, and precision, how to operate each shop piece of equipment, and that's what we did. You learn how to do it, and after awhile, they separated the top students, and gave them advanced [**indecipherable**] and I was one of them, was a few of us. And after about a year, I was offered to go to **Vavey**, they are gonna have a college over there, and oh -- teach **ORT** -- how to teach **ORT** students.

Q: To learn to be an instructor.

A: I would be an instru -- or an instructor. And I said okay, but then I got worried that there is a transport of 50 people, **United States** will let them in as long as their relatives are sponsors in the States, they can go. And that's how I got to the States.

Q: Let me ask you something. What -- what were you learning? What -- what was **ORT** training you to do? Would -- did they have different kinds of courses, and you took one kind of course?

A: They were carpentry.

Q: Mm-hm.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: There was one guy, this guy **Morrie Goldfinger**, he's a friend of mine, he couldn't comprehend math, and physics, so they sent him to a butcher shop, to learn how to be a butcher. And he was -- let me tell you, he was very successful as a butcher in the States. He really did well for himself. Used to go out for dinner, and he would go into the back kitchen, and you want to buy meat, I'll give you a good break on meat. And he built up a good business. And some of them learned carpentry. You know, whatever you were suited for.

Q: And -- and what were you learning?

A: Mechanics. I wa --

Q: Uh-huh. So you were continuing what you had studied --

A: Yes, I was -- I was good at being mechanic -- mechanical.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And that's what I was doing in **Switzerland**.

Q: In -- in August of 1946, a psychologist named **David Boder** was in **Geneva** interviewing people. Do you have any recollection of being interviewed back then?

A: I -- I had a slight, a very, very slight, but don't remember -- I don't [**indecipherable**] what he looked like, but I do remember now that you brought it up that he was interviewing -- somebody was interviewing me. And that's about all.

Q: And that's all. Let me just play you a few minutes. I'm -- I'm hoping that you can hear this, and I'll bring it near you. We'll play the first few minutes of the beginning of the

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

tape. Now it's silent -- where he just asks you a few questions. First in English [**plays audio tape of Boder interview**]. Does this -- do --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- do you recognize your voice?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Do you -- does hearing it bring back any memory of talking with him?

A: Some, some.

Q: It does?

A: Yeah.

Q: Is his voice familiar to you?

A: Yes.

Q: It is?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you picture him in your mind?

A: No.

Q: No. So you have -- you can't see where it was you were sitting --

A: No.

Q: -- or anything --

A: No.

Q: -- just a vague

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yeah, it is vague, as I was --

Q: Right. Well he interviewed over a hundred people in various cities in -- in **Europe**.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: So you're one of the few people. And I guess I can't ask you any questions about it --

A: No.

Q: -- because -- do you have any recollection of who told you talk with him?

A: It was **Madame Goldman**. She was in charge of **ORT** down there, and -- and she was the one who's -- thought I should talk to him. And she was very nice lady.

Q: You talked with him, I don't know, it was about -- little less than 45 minutes, I think.

A: That long, huh?

Q: Yeah, 45 minutes to an hour. And you -- you couldn't tell him what you did in the **United States**, you got up --

A: No.

Q: -- about as far as **Switzerland** --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- with him, yes. So we will give you a copy of that tape, so you can --

A: Okay.

Q: -- so you can hear yourse --

A: I'll s -- I'll listen and study it.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And s -- and see what you come up with. What -- so this is -- that -- that interview was August 27th, 1946. Had you heard from the **United States** by then that you had relatives there --

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: Ha -- that came sudden. It didn't -- didn't take long. Once we heard that, we went to the American consulate, and they gave us visas to go to the States.

Q: And that was it.

A: That was it.

Q: And how did these relatives find you, do you think?

A: Also through **HIAS**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know, everybody was looking for relatives, I mean, you know, and they looked through **HIAS**, and they said okay.

Q: So where did you land when you got to the **United States**? How was that trip, by the way, how did you --

A: It was a very nice trip.

Q: A nice trip?

A: We were -- we were on the **S.S. Drongiholm**, on the I -- dr -- **Drongiholm**, that was a cruise ship, actually.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Really?

A: And we were on the bottom, you know, hold there, it's --

Q: Right.

A: -- but the food was regular passenger food, you know, we were mixing with passengers. So it was a very p -- nice ship coming down to -- coming to the States.

Q: And were you physically recovered now from whatever you had?

A: Yes, yes, I was physically well recovered.

Q: Yeah? And were you excited to go to the **United States**?

A: Yes.

Q: Did yo -- did you have any idea of what to expect?

A: I had no idea what to expect in the States, and no -- I didn't know what my relatives looked like, and who they were, and whatever.

Q: And who were they related to, your dad or your --

A: My -- my brother. I mean, my father, they were brothers.

Q: Your father. They were brothers to your father.

A: My father was the youngest brother.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And they came to the States before the war. So --

Q: Did they meet you at the boat?

A: Yes.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Did other friends of yours travel on the same boat, or were you alone?

A: No, was a bunch of us.

Q: There were?

A: Yes.

Q: So --

A: Not all 50 of us, but it was I would say about a dozen or so.

Q: So you didn't hear this mythology that -- that the -- the streets of **America** were --

A: No, no --

Q: -- paved with gold, or anything like that?

A: -- no, I had no idea what to expect.

Q: Nothing.

A: Nothing. Figure there is gold I'll have to dig for it.

Q: Yeah, really. And the trip was what, seven or eight days? Or --

A: No, no, I -- I think it was six, seven days. I don't -- I don't remember how long it took.

Q: So it was ri -- it was very pleasant?

A: It was a pleasant cruise, you know.

Q: Did --

A: And when I got off the ship, my relatives expected me to come off in some raggedy clothes, and I was all dressed up in a nice suit and tie, and they said, "Where the hell is he coming from?"

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So -- but, you know, he -- we were allowed some money in expenses, and wh-what do you call it, we bought nice clothes to come to the States.

Q: Right. And who -- who met you, either two brothers or one brother?

A: Two brothers.

Q: Two brothers.

A: They both -- both met us. Bo --

Q: Did they look like your father?

A: There was a similarity there, yes.

Q: And you had never met them?

A: No. As a matter of fact, one day I -- my cousin, first cousin, I was at hi -- at his daughter's house, and we sat next to each other, now don't tell me that they don't look alike. We do look quite alike.

Q: Yeah. Would -- did they remind you of your father in some way? Were they somewhat like him?

A: My father was a more outgoing --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My father was a lot more outgoing, they were a little more subdued, you know, and --

Q: So -- but was it good to be able to be with them because they were relat -- because they were your father's brothers?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Well, yes, but that wasn't my favorite place to be.

Q: It wasn't?

A: No. Because, first of all, I was a li -- staying in the living room, and sleeping on the couch. That wasn't the best situation. I had no privacy, and most of my friends were in **Manhattan**. So after I don't know how many weeks, or maybe a month or six weeks, I got a hotel room with a friend of mine in **Manhattan**, on **Hundred Street** and **Broadway**, and we got a room, a beautiful room, and somebody was cleaning it every day, and you know, you use the restaurants down there wherever you turned, and I was working already, so I have some money, and --

Q: It was okay?

A: Mm.

Q: And your relatives were living where, **Brooklyn**?

A: No, in **Queens**.

Q: In **Queens**.

A: **Jackson Heights**.

Q: So that must have felt really far away from --

A: Yes and no.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yes and no. My -- their children, my cousins, we kept in touch.

Q: Mm-hm. Were they sorry to see you go? Did they --

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yes, my -- really were kind of disappointed that I left, but you know, wasn't -- wasn't -- wasn't my way of living. I was up to knowing there's a little better things in life than sleeping on the couch without privacy.

Q: Right. And what did your father's brothers do? What was --

A: Well, one of them owned a bun -- a -- a -- a Laundromat, or a cleaning store, stuff like that, and they were pretty well off. And they're the ones who sent -- it was 350 dollars for the trip. And they are the ones who sponsored the 350 thousand -- 350 dollars. The other one was -- he was -- you know, those days you didn't have washing machines, so you picked up laundry, and bring it to the laundry, and bah, bah, bah. So they weren't too well off, and that's where I was staying, basically. And wasn't my ideal place, for a real life to live. And moving to **Manhattan**, there was a lot of other friends that I knew, and was more accessible to places, and doing things, and I ju -- I -- I really did enjoy it much better. Excuse me.

Q: Did you go to night school right away to learn English?

A: First thing, yes.

Q: First thing.

A: First thing I did is register to school, and I went to school. And there -- I -- I remember I used to go to work, and -- from eight to 4:30, and I -- it was an old Greek restaurant there, and I used to go there, do my homework. And classes would start at seven o'clock, seven to 10, and it was a routine, daily routine.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And what were you -- what work were you doing? Were you [indecipherable]

A: Well, I started off with a s -- first of all -- first job I had was operating a automatic turret lathe.

Q: An automatic --

A: Turret lathe. It's a lathe that --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- does repetitive work, you know, you set it up once, and it keeps knocking out hundreds of pieces of whatever you set it up for.

Q: And you have to watch it to make sure it's --

A: I have to watch it that everything goes well, so -- but you si -- you si -- stand there like a dummy.

Q: Right.

A: So my uncle had a -- knew somebody who had a shop, a machine shop, and he told me to go down there for an interview. And the guy who I was working for, only about two or three days, "Oh," he says, "y-you s -- you can't leave." He was a Greek and he spoke some German, and he says, "You can't leave, you're doing such a good job." I said, "I can't stand here, you know, s -- stand in that one spot doing nothing." So I went down there for the interview, and I -- he hired me right away, and now I'm -- so I went to work over there, and he paid me 75 cents an hour, and I did -- you know, whatever I had to do, and one day they were trying to do something, to solder a certain part and a -- it was an al

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

-- a lot of them, and nobody knew how to do it. So I said, "I'll show you how to do it." So all of a sudden, "How about you come in on Saturday and do all that?" I said okay. And then they found out a lot of things I was able to do that they weren't too good at it. So all of a sudden, I'm working overtime, but no raise, still 75 cents an hour. So you -- at school, I -- I talked to all these different guys, one guy's telling me there's a company that is hiring, the name is National Equipment, and they told me the address. "Why don't you go down there, see if they'll hire you?" So I went down there, and sure enough they hired me, and I was getting a dollar and a quarter an hour. Making a big money now.

Q: Big money, absolutely.

A: I make big bucks now.

Q: Right.

A: So I got the job, and over there I -- I did very well over there also, so they put me with this guy to work. He was the guy who was traveling out to [indecipherable] not, so -- but whenever he did something, he did it so I shouldn't see. I says, "**Mitch,**" I says, "you don't have to hide, I know how to do that, it is -- just don't worry about it." So him and I went out on the first job, over the weekend, you know, they had some problems [indecipherable] some of the equipment to straighten it out. So he says, oh I can't -- I said I want to stay in this hotel, and he said, "Oh, I can't stay there, it's too much money." I go, "That's too bad. I'm going to stay there, and you go wherever the flea b -- flea-bit hotel." So sure enough he went there that night, I told him we gotta meet for

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

dinner over someplace, and he was afraid to order anything half decent. And I just handed my bill in, and he handed his, and I got paid, he got paid, nobody said a word, you know? But he didn't last long, he died. And all of a sudden I'm the guy who has to go out there on my own. Which I did, and I -- and I remember at one time I -- I was in bo -- they send me out to **Boston**, and the owners over there look at me, he says, "What are they sending children out now?" Because I was blonde, blue-eyed blonde, and I looked younger than I was, and I said, "I tell you what," I said, "You give me **carte blanche**, and -- I'll -- I'll meet your deadline." And he says I -- I -- I says -- excuse me -- "It's a deal," he says, "If you do it, I'll buy you the biggest lobster in **Boston**." I said, "Okay." Well, Sunday afternoon I call him up, I say, "You better come down here, they're ready to roll." He comes down there, and he said, "Oh my God." He said, "Come on, I'll buy you that big lobster."

Q: So you did it.

A: I did [**indecipherable**]

Q: Tell me something, this first year that you're in the **United States**, do people ask you what happened to you? Di --

A: Some people, how, isn't it terrible what they did to you? I says, "Please, don't give me that. I -- I went through all that already, so don't ask me to tell you what happened to me. It happened and it's gone, it's for -- forget about it." So wha --

Q: So you -- you didn't want to talk about it?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: I didn't want to talk about it, no. Even with my family or anybody, I didn't want to talk about it.

Q: Why, do you think?

A: Because I choke up.

Q: Uh-huh. And you still choke up.

A: Well, I -- I do high school -- I do schools now.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And sometimes I still will choke up, and there wi -- tears roll down.

Q: Right. Do you have dreams about it?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: Do you not watch movies about it? You don't like movies anyway.

A: I -- I -- I rather don't.

Q: You rather don't. Do you read?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it about -- about the Holocaust?

A: Well, I read about certain individuals who, you know, professors who wrote and --

Q: Uh-huh.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: [indecipherable] and stuff like that, and he -- he -- how -- how they got through the war, and you know, the -- how this family, I just read a book, I don't remember the name. This family was religious and this one girl there was a rebel, and on and on, and then she met somebody and he was -- what do you call it -- got drafted into Hungarian army, and being he was a Jew, was [indecipherable] so he ran away, he -- and so you know, and then he got -- he never got into concentration camp, but he hid someplace, and -- it was an interesting story.

Q: So, when you came to the **United States**, you certainly noticed that there was a great deal of racism in the **United States**. Did this make you worry about what kind of a country it was?

A: I was -- I had blinders on.

Q: You like -- really?

A: I had blinders on. And a couple of times when somebody [indecipherable] the Jews come over, the refugees come over, trying to take over, and I kind of got nasty about it, you know, and -- but that's a -- I didn't make an issue out of it.

Q: And did you see from the -- what happened to African Americans, to black people in the **United States**?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you wonder what sort of a country this was?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Well, I worked with some of them, you know, in shop. Some of them were frankly, real -- really nice. But some of them were really sometimes were more anti-Semitic than anybody else, the blacks. A-And after awhile I lost sympathy because of that. I said here is a -- here are people who are being persecuted, an-and now they're hating Jews and, you know, it does not -- it doesn't make any sense. So I lost sympathy.

Q: Okay.

A: But some of them, you know, a lot of them were nice, they're -- they're qualified. I had -- I had a guy who worked for me up in **Horseheads**, and he worked in the machine shop, and then I made him a foreman. And after awhile he saw me on the street, and he came over, and he hugged me, he says [**indecipherable**]. "You're the first guy who gave me a break, and I was able to get a good job because I had all that background." You know? And I said all -- I -- I had a few guys working. One of -- one of them was really a - - I -- I never could get mad at him, because he was always funny. He was a lousy worker, but he was -- I couldn't get -- ever get mad at him. Whenever I would bawl him out, he would always come with jokes and laughing. I says, "Get out of here." Tell ya.

Q: When did you meet your wife?

A: I met my jo -- wife in 1950 -- '49, actually.

Q: So you were in the country for three years before --

A: Yes.

Q: Uh-huh.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: I was -- I think actually fall of fi -- '59. In 1950 we got married.

Q: And how did you meet her?

A: I was at the **Y** on a dance, the **YM** -- wa -- **YMCA**, Jewish **Y**, you know, men's -- men's **Y**. Was a dance and we used to go there. Used to go there [**indecipherable**] you'd have dances. And it was a bunch of us used to go dancing, you know, looking for girls and stuff like that, so I m -- I met her there, and I -- I was a good looking kid, you know, and I asked her to dance, oh she was elated that somebody -- and I opened my mouth, she says -- but then she -- she didn't mind, you know, and --

Q: What, that she'd mind that you had an accent?

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh. Other -- other girls, did? Other women did?

A: Well, I'll -- I'll tell you, at the same night, this **Henry Jainer**, that you know, he was with us that time, he met her friend, and he called her up also for a date, and she gave him the wrong number on purpose. I asked my girlfriend that time, was -- became my wife, and she said she knew about it and she was very perturbed over it, because she had no right to do that. If she doesn't want to see him --

Q: She should tell him.

A: Yeah. She should give him any number. So --

Q: And when were -- you -- you have two daughters.

A: Two daughters.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And they were born?

A: Well one of them is in '52.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And one of them was '55.

Q: Right. Did you talk to your children as they were growing up? I mean, when they reached a certain age?

A: No.

Q: You didn't? So they knew nothing about your history?

A: No. They knew that I was a survivor.

Q: They did?

A: They knew I was a survivor, but thi -- I never talked about what, where, when and how.

Q: And they didn't ask?

A: Now they know because I showed them the **Spielberg** tape.

Q: Right.

A: But

Q: But before that --

A: Before --

Q: -- and that was '96. So all these years --

A: All these years I -- I couldn't -- I couldn't get myself to talk about it.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And they probably were shy to say -- to ask you.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Although my wife used to tell them, if your father doesn't want to talk about it, then just leave him alone.

Q: Right. Did you talk about it with your wife?

A: Yes.

Q: Did she talk to them about it?

A: She would tell them that I was in concentration camp, and I went through hell, but no details.

Q: I see.

A: No details.

Q: Right. Okay, let -- we'll change the tape.

End of Tape Five

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Beginning Tape Six

Q: When did you start talking in schools about the Holocaust?

A: I would say about three years ago.

Q: So it was very late, af -- after that interview with the **Shoah** Foundation?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Why did you agree to do that interview do you think, after all these years?

A: Well I -- I -- I felt the world should know what was going on, because there was a lot of deniers, and I felt it's time that we talk up, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- and that's what decided me to go to schools also, and talk about it in schools.

Q: Do you enjoy doing that?

A: Yeah, I -- I enjoy the questions the kids throw at you, you know, and so -- thing is, what -- what gets me more than anything else, everybody wants to see my tattoo. Now, people are being tattooed left and right, all over their body, what -- what's -- what is the big novelty about seeing a ta -- a number tattoo?

Q: I don't know.

A: I don't know either.

Q: Except you didn't choose to get it, it's a --

A: But that's -- but that -- that's the biggest question --

Q: Really?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: -- o-of curiosity, to see my tattoo.

Q: Huh.

A: So.

Q: And what do they do when they see it? Do they just --

A: They get oh, oh --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So -- does it --

Q: What other question --

A: -- did it hurt?

Q: Yeah.

A: And all kind of -- did they beat you up, did you this, did you that, you know, stuff like that. You know, children's curiosity --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know, youngsters can --

Q: And you speak mainly to -- to children that -- where, middle school kids?

A: Middle school, basically middle school.

Q: Not -- not high school kids?

A: One hi -- I did one high school.

Q: Mm-hm. Do you prefer talking with the younger kids?

A: Yeah, I -- I prefer to. Their -- their minds are a little more open.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: I see.

A: They're more curiosity, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- more questions that -- ki-kids in high school, they think they know it all by this time, you know, their -- and my daughters weren't any different. They thought we were dummies, and they knew all the answers.

Q: I see, right.

A: You know, so --

Q: How long did you live in **New York City** with your wife?

A: Let me see, we moved out 1966.

Q: Oh, so you were there a long time?

A: Yeah.

Q: 16 years. And is that when you moved to upper **New York State**?

A: Yeah, because that time, **A&P** was building that huge facility, and I was sent up there to organize it, and hire skilled mechanics, and carpenters, electricians, started --

Q: To start up.

A: -- you know, to get the ball rolling.

Q: Had you started working for **A&P** when you were in **New York City**?

A: Yes. I worked for them -- well, I -- I worked for this -- I told you, for a dollar and a quarter, this outfit?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And I worked for them, and they were also not paying very well, the wa -- the times are going on, and you know, yo-you're looking forward to better yourself.

Q: Right.

A: And **A&P** that time, well they were in **Brooklyn**, and we were in **Brooklyn** also, the plant. We installed a lot of equipment over there, and they couldn't make it go, they actually got calls all the time, this is no good, this [**indecipherable**] guys didn't do right, and so I would go down there and find out what their problem is. And little silly things that just -- so one day I said, "You guys are the biggest dummies in the world," I said. "You can't figure out what's wrong over here?" I says, "Why don't you get somebody over here who -- who will show you how to do this?" He says, "Yeah," he said, "why don't you come to work for us?" I said, "I will not." So I said, "I don't want to work for you guys." Well, [**indecipherable**] they kept calling my wife, they called my mother-in-law, they found out where my mother-in-law lives, and **bubba**, and everybody, they bugging me, you know, to -- I said, "Okay, I'll co -- I'll come to work there." Meantime where I was working, "Oh, we'll make you a foreman over here," and you -- "don-don't leave us because you are good wh-what -- what you are doing, and blah, blah, blah." So I said, "Well you guys aren't paying enough, so I'll go over there." And so I went to **A&P** and I worked over there for about two, or two and a half years. And I read in the paper there's a job really paying well, it was in 19 -- I think it was in '52. And I took that job,

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

and it was designing and setting up printing presses for newspapers and magazines. So I went for an interview and I got the job, and I worked there for -- well, I think it was about 11 months. In 11 months I made over 9,000 dollars. That time was a lot of money, in '52. So -- but they then decided -- the union decided -- and I wasn't part of it -- to go on strike. And the boss tells me, "**Al**," he says, "after the strike, we going to have to lay off almost everybody because we lost a lot of business." So then I went out to -- Monday morning I went out for interviews. So I saw there was **AT & T**, **Crucible Steel**, and **Colgate Palmolive** had ads. So first I went to **Colgate**, with a line up of about 50 people. So I finally got to the line there, and, "Okay," he says, "come on in the engineering office." I says -- "and I want you to read this, showing how you would go about it." So I said okay. So I went over, and then they brought me in the plant, and in the machine shop, and how would you handle this, and -- in the plant how would you handle this [**indecipherable**]. I said, "Okay, thank you." Then I went to **Crucible Steel**, and they did a -- test me also, and I says, okay. And then I went to **AT & T**, and **AT & T** was a lab, and they said they would hire me, but that was about two o'clock in the afternoon, I wasn't too far from the **A&P** plant, so I went down there, and I went to personnel, I said, "I want to talk to my -- **Olie Turgison**," who was my boss with -- before I left. He says -- so the guy down there says, "He doesn't want to talk to you, you left over here." I said, "Just call him up and tell him I want to talk to him." So he came down here, "Oh come on, I'll buy you a cup of coffee." And he asked me, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well I

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

think I -- I think I got a job at **Colgate Palmolive**, th-they pay the most, and they are -- and I feel that's a good company to work for." So he says, "Well, how would you like to come to work for us?" I said -- I told him what **Colgate** is paying, and, "If you guys can meet **Colgate's** salary, I'll come to work for you." The next morning, Tuesday morning I get a call at nine o'clock or so, he said -- he -- he told me he has to talk to the big boss. He says, "Where the heck are you," he said, "you're supposed to be working over here since eight o'clock in the morning," he says, "it's nine o'clock, you should have been here." I says okay. So I went down there, and then I got promoted a couple of times with **A&P**, and that's when they send me up to **Horseheads**, and --

Q: And so you were there for a long time.

A: Yeah, I was there for a long time.

Q: And how did you get to **Florida**?

A: Well my daughter, younger daughter just finished college, and we were buying the **New York Times** to look for a job for her, and while I was helping her find a job, I come across -- and there is a job over here, maintenance manager to s -- what do you call it, to run a facility in **Florida, Tropicana**. So my wife -- I -- I open up my mouth, I said [indecipherable], I said, "is a job that suits me to a **T**." So my wife wants to know where is it. I said, "Oh, it's down in **Florida**." "Where in **Florida**?" I said, "**Bradenton**." "Aren't you going to apply for it?" I said no. So right away my daughter starts that, "Mom wants to go to **Florida**, why don't you apply for it?" "I don't want to." So they

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

worked on me all day long. It was on a Sunday. Finally in the evening, I said, "If you do a cover letter, I'll fi -- I'll make up a resume, and we'll send it in." And who the heck wants a 50 year old guy to run a facility? Well, p.s. -- we dropped it off in the mail on Monday, and Friday morning they called my house, and my wife says y -- I'm at work. Can they call me at work? And she says, "No." she says, "you give me your phone number, he'll call you back." So I called them back and we had a long -- well over an hour on the phone and they wanted me come down for an interview. And I flew down there on a Friday afternoon, because I told them I'm not going to waste any of my job over here and spend days down there loaf -- you know, goofing off. I said, "If you want me, I'll come down for f -- an interview for Saturday." So they left a car in -- out -- in -- near the ho -- in the hotel where I was staying, with the instruction how to get there, and I got there, was about nine o'clock, and the interview was over about noon time. I asked can they get me a real estate guy, and they said yes, and they -- I looked around, and I liked the area, and I told them what it would take to get me, and Tuesday I got a call, how soon can you make it? And that's how I got to **Florida**.

Q: And you stayed there from 1966 until you retired, huh?

A: Yeah. So that's how -- it was -- it was a nice -- it was -- I'll tell you, it was really hard, an-and tough in the beginning, then -- after awhile, because the job that I took, was 11 guys in nine years had that job. Nobody could handle it.

Q: Really?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: And when I took the job, they -- I was told that they were taking bets on me how long I'm going to last. I sis -- somebody said three months, and they gave -- maximum would be six months, and after all -- I'll be gone by then. But I fooled them all.

Q: Why was it so difficult?

A: Because was a tough job, it was -- and it was really p -- really poorly organized, and everything else, and the equipment wasn't maintained properly, so when I got in there I started to redesign the equipment, and build my own equipment, you know, to improve everything else. And things started to hum. Pro-Productivity --

Q: Right.

A: -- was starting to go up. And the first few months, my wife used to tell me, "Why don't you take a cot and sleep over there," she said, "y-you're always on call. You come home, you don't even sit down to eat, the phone is ringing." So it took about six months, and -- and then things started to calm down and straighten out and I got a nice raise after six months, and -- **Tropicana** treated me well. I got promoted -- from there I got promoted to manager of project engineering. And I was on -- that was job -- best job I ever had because I had no responsibility. All I did was critique everybody else's engineering work. I was the manager, and going over all the prints and designs, and -- but all of a sudden, I was on a golf course, I got a call, my boss wants to see me immediately. So my wife called the golf course up and got a message to me I'd better get home. And I got home, I said, "What's the matter?" She says, "**Brent** wants to t -- see you right away.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

But he's home now, so why don't you go to his house and see what he wants?" So I got down there, he says, "How would you like to have a big promotion?" I says, "I'll take anything as long as it's more money, I'll take it." So he says, "You'll be director of manufacturing. And that means you'll have **carte blanche**, you can hire and fire anybody. It's five departments." It's -- really I had 600 some odd people under me. I had five departments, about 30 supervisors, and that's what I --

Q: That's fantastic. Are you bitter at all about the years that you spent in **Europe** under the Nazis?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: If I be bitter, then I be eating myself alive. And I don't want to do that. I had some German guys working for me, and we became friends. I was invited -- we were invited to -- my wife and I, to their house, and stuff like that. And we -- you just can't -- you can't hate th-the rest of your life.

Q: Right.

A: If you do then -- then you're a loser. It's easy to hate, and it's a -- but you just can't do it.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say that I haven't asked you about, or that you'd like to say?

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: Yeah, well all -- all I can tell you is in the States I -- we -- I -- I -- I worked hard, I studied hard. I had a happy marriage. Unfortunately, my wife passed away, and that -- that -- that kind of hit me.

Q: You were married for more than 50 years, that's just --

A: No, t -- three months shy of 50.

Q: Oh.

A: And no -- we were -- we were very happy together, and the kids, and we were always doing things together, going places, and doing all kinds of things, and had a good life.

Q: Right.

A: And -- and -- and that -- you know, never had any problems or sickness, and all that stuff, everybody. My kids, you know, the ji -- the usual problems with kids, you know, sore throats, earaches, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- but otherwise, everything was just --

Q: But no serious illnesses in the family --

A: No, no, no.

Q: -- so you were very lucky.

A: So, and --

Q: So her dying was a shock that was just --

A: Oh yeah.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: -- she wasn't sick?

A: No, she wasn't sick, but all of a sudden, she had problems. She had -- she had a pain in the -- over here, and we went to the doctor, and found out her lungs -- they took x-rays -- her lungs are filled up with fluid. So they decided -- they kept -- emptied out -- pumped out the fluid, and two weeks later the same thing filled up, so they decided, went to a doctors again, they decided to open up and see what's causing it. They found out she has pancreatic cancer.

Q: Oh.

A: And by -- and this was after Thanksgiving. By January 30th, she was gone.

Q: So that was a big shock to you.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: And to the kids, I imagine.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the kids -- the grandkids [**indecipherable**] and I was really surprised by the kids, because you know, I took all the jewelry that belonged to my wife and stuff, and I put it down, and here, you guys do -- you know, do whatever you want. And I -- I expect that maybe there'll be some arguments or something. And I felt, if there is an argument, then I just stop it, and can't have nothing. I want this, oh then I'll take this, I want this, I'll take

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

this and on and on, and not even one squabble, or anything. And I felt that was really und -- you know, nice that I didn't have any arguments, because you hear about families --

Q: Absolutely.

A: -- fighting, you know. I want this, or you can't have this because I want this, and so on and on, so -- so that -- that was a good thing, that -- and as a matter of fact, we planned a cruise for our 50th wedding anniversary, and I even bought tickets, paid for it all, for I think was April or May. And I sat down the kids, I said, "You guys still want to go on that cruise?" And they said, "Yes, we want to go in memory of Mom." So, okay, we went.

Q: And that was good?

A: Yeah, it was good, everybody was together and stuff like that.

Q: And you've been able to meet someone else [indecipherable] relationship.

A: Yes, I met someone, I met s -- I met a nice young lady, and she was --

Q: Right.

A: -- her daughter was a friend of my daughter.

Q: Right.

A: And I never knew that, and she never knew that, because she knew my daughter's married name, but she didn't know my own, **Kalish**.

Q: Right.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

A: But if she would have known that I w -- my d -- ar -- that I am the father of my daughter's married name, she would have connected it, so -- but I described, you know, being she was from **Shreveport**, and her daughter from **Shreveport**, that's how we connected.

Q: Right. So it's a very nice --

A: Yeah, well --

Q: A very nice --

A: -- she's a nice lady, and we get along fine --

Q: Right.

A: -- and we didn't get married, and I don't know if we will get married, because I'm -- I felt 50 years of marriage --

Q: Is enough?

A: -- is enough. She would like to get married, but --

Q: You don't think you want to?

A: No.

Q: Well, **Alan**, I thank you so much for taking time to talk with us.

A: Well, I'm happy that I was able to help you, and give you my story. And I hope it do some -- does some good.

Q: I'm sure it will.

A: And that's about all I can tell you.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: Okay, thank you.

Q: **Alan**, what is this photo here?

A: This is my father when he was -- I guess he was in his early teenager, or early 20's.

Q: And this photograph you got from your -- your brother when he came?

A: Yeah, brother brought it over when he came. Was in the house where those people were living, and you know, they gave it to him.

Q: And when did your brother come to the States?

A: My brother came in 1965 -- '64 - '65.

Q: And this photo?

A: This photo is from my parents, my mom and dad. Actually it's a wedding picture. You see the white gown, but there is no veil on it, you know, but the white gown, it was a wedding picture.

Q: And when did they get married, do you know?

A: I don't know.

Q: You were born in '27, so it was before '27.

A: Yeah, it was before '27.

Q: **[indecipherable]**

A: That was on the old school itself, and we are sitting on a bench in the school itself.

Q: And this is 1947?

A: No, '46.

Interview with Alan Kalish
October 24, 2003

Q: And which one's you? And this photo?

A: This one was in **Geneva, Switzerland** -- actually, it wasn't in **Geneva**, we were on an outing, a bunch of us, and it was school break, actually, early spring, and we went out on a -- actually at one time, we took a bicycle tour throughout **Switzerland**, and we stayed at u -- a young her -- what do you call it?

Q: Youth hostel?

A: Youth **holis**, yes.

Q: And this?

A: And we lived on the farms, actually.

Q: Really? And this was one of your outings?

A: One of our outings.

Q: And this right here?

A: We did quite a few outings, wha -- whenever we had the chance to do it.

Q: Right.

End of Tape Six

Conclusion of Interview