

INTERVIEW WITH SOLOMON SULTANIK

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**Transcending Trauma Project
Council for Relationships
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Interview with Solomon Sultanik, survivor, May 5, 1994.

INT: This is an interview with Solomon Sultanik on May 5, 1994; it's the first tape. Hi Sol. Would you tell us your name?

SOL: Solomon Sultanik.

INT: And what is your age, if you'll divulge it?

SOL: Seventy-two.

INT: And where were you born?

SOL: In a small town in Poland and the name is Września. This is in the county of Miechow (Masovian) and the state of Kielce in Poland.

INT: And what big city was it near?

SOL: Kielce.

INT: Kielce.

SOL: That's a state, yeah, it's a state, city. Right.

INT: What is your marital status at this point?

SOL: I'm married.

INT: How many years have you been married?

SOL: I've been married since 1948.

INT: And what level of education have you had?

SOL: I had the Polish Public School which ran from eight years to fourteen. This was a public school in which consisted of six days of schooling starting at eight and finished at four. On Saturdays I did not use that school because of our religious background. So I had to make it up with a Gentile friend and be on the level that I don't fall behind. I was doing very well in school and that I think answers your question.

INT: Okay, yeah. Were you close friends with this Gentile - was it a boy?

SOL: Yeah, boy, neighbor. It was very close. He was in the same class, and I did not sit next to him, but he cooperated with me, and he gave me very well and a good information as to what was going on, on Saturday in school.

INT: Wow, that's wonderful. What type of education did your wife have?

SOL: My wife had as far as I know she had Hebrew School in Krakow. She lived in a city, a larger city so she had the opportunity to go to that Hebrew School, and they taught in Hebrew and Polish.

INT: Okay. How have you been employed over the years since coming to, you know more recent years since coming to the States?

SOL: In the States I did everything possible. I came to New York first. I only worked about two weeks for a mechanical engineering firm with I had some background in Poland because I was going to public school and mechanical school. I took for about three years in the evenings and I was working for a motorcycle/bicycle shop in Poland. And I think that's....

INT: So how about after you, your [unclear] here?

SOL: Oh, after I came over here. After the two weeks at work in New York I quit and I went on my own. And since that time 'til now I never worked for anybody else.

INT: And what kind of work have you been doing?

SOL: In New York I bought, I had a little bit of money, and I bought a rooming house, and I fixed it up, and I started and I renting it. I was renting it and then I sold it because my cousin talked me into moving to this area here in Lansdale which I lived since.

INT: And we're very lucky that he talked you into doing that. So what type of work have you been doing since you moved to this area?

SOL: Over here we had a factory in which was supposed to be in pretty good shape. And as I came over here I had a good business background, and I noticed that that factory was in almost in bankruptcy. And we were renting that building in Hatfield, here, and it was a hosiery mill. And I put in all my money in it, whatever I had saved and brought from Germany, and in the beginning we were struggling badly. And I brought that, I was the one who was running it, and I brought it to a point that it was showing some profit. We had about thirty, forty people employed, and I was doing the bookkeeping, and paying the payroll and worrying about the finances. Unfortunately, the factory one day we had that was a very dilapidated building and as a mechanic tried to fix it, the heater, on the outside the tank; the factory caught on fire. And it was just before Christmas. And if this would have happened two weeks later we would have shipped out probably for about fifty, sixty thousand dollars of merchandise and we lost every little bit. And I went out without a penny and the insurance also called for replacement of the building. Since we were newcomers, we didn't know too much about the insurance so we didn't

have the proper insurance on the building. So we had to, we were responsible for a dilapidated building which was not worth \$5,000 and I think we had to pay about \$30,000 for it. This was in 19, about 1952. No, 1949, '49, '50. Right. So that's about, and then I was out of work, and for a while and then finally I started, I found a man from Russia here by the name of Sammy Yassi and other Italian fellow who also was without work. And I had about \$5,000, I borrowed some money; and he had \$5,000 and we started the building business. He was supposed to be the mechanic, but he had a lot of faults, and then we started to learn and working from five o'clock in the morning 'til about ten o'clock at night for years. And we just continued, and we built a house from A to Z and we sold it. And then I ventured into a piece of ground, and we bought the ground, and I built a sample, which cost me about that time about \$14,000 and I put up for sale the home for \$12,990. And my partner didn't agree with my theory, and he said he wants to get out and I paid him out. He made about \$5,000 in the total deal and he left. He left on his own and I built those houses. And a matter of fact I made about \$50,000 that time at the end of the project. And then I bought another piece of ground and I almost lost everything again. But from then on I was careful, and buying small portions of ground, and building one house at a time and then more. And I progressed and then I came to the point I am now.

INT: Tell me about your son. You have one child?

SOL: Yes. His name is Jeffrey, and he was born in New York and we brought him over here to Hatfield as a small baby. And (pause) and he went to school over here in the Lansdale area, and then in high school he joined the Germantown Academy, and he had wonderful schooling and we have a lot of nachas.

INT: Now where does he live now?

SOL: He lives in Lansdale.

INT: And how about his family? Is he married and?

SOL: He is married. He has two wonderful children, one boy and one girl. One is eleven, the boy is eleven and the girl is seven. They belong to Tiferet Bet Israel over here, same synagogue as we belong to, and they, both children, go to the same school, Germantown Academy.

INT: What type of education did Jeff pursue after high school?

SOL: He went to University of Pennsylvania for his undergraduate and also the graduate school. And then he went to law school to Hofstra on Long Island, New York.

INT: Can you tell me a little bit about his transition from public school to Germantown Academy? The reason, you know, why you all wanted him to go there or what?

SOL: As we had some difficulties with having him as maybe one or two Jewish children in that high school over here. There were not too many Jewish students around and I thought that he felt a little bit awkward. He was maybe a little bit different of his background and everything

else so we thought that it might be advisable for him to join a school where he has more of his religious background. As a matter of fact it helped him a lot, and he was very successful and he was number one in the Germantown Academy.

INT: You mentioned just now that you belong to Tiferet Bet Israel. Can you tell me a little bit about your involvement there and why you, this is a Conservative synagogue, why you would choose a Conservative synagogue?

SOL: Basically I did not choose any synagogue of my choice, of my taste or religious background. I joined the synagogue in Lansdale which was Beth Israel and it was in a stage where they were in the old building on Broad Street; they had a hard time to start. And as a matter of fact that time I had a hard time even to offer and pay my full duties and my full, I mean obligations. But it was a cooperation more or less from the synagogue. And I paid it, a matter of fact later on. Then this synagogue as we know all over here, they joined Tiferet Bet Israel with a Norristown group and during the stage in Beth Israel I was involved in the synagogue and I was on the board for a few years. And also, a matter of fact, I had a little subdivision over there on the ground and they were looking for a place where to build their new synagogue and move from Broad Street because it was, the building was not adequate and the congregation was growing at that time a little bit. So we built that building on the grounds which I provided and I got paid for it, as a matter of fact, but not enough. But I was in a stage where I really needed the money for that ground but I could have sold it probably for twice as much as I sold it to the synagogue. And the history of the synagogue in Lansdale was about for a few years also struggling, and never came up to a point where we could exist, and then we joined with Norristown.

INT: What other organizations do you belong to?

SOL: I belong to about two, three groups up there - B'nai Brith; I belong to the Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Philadelphia; and other charitable organizations like the Holocaust Museum in Washington. I'm a member in that organization and all other charitable organizations I support in general.

INT: Do you belong to any of the secular business groups in the area?

SOL: What do you mean?

INT: Let's see, what is it called? Like either like Rotary or there's all sorts of, there's a professional business group in Lansdale that....

SOL: Not exactly. I am a member of the Commerce.

INT: Oh, the Chamber of Commerce.

SOL: But I did not, most of my junctures were in the Jewish affiliated organizations and I have enough to support that. I don't look for any other. I did not join any of the Lions Clubs or some other clubs here and I stay with it as far as I plan to support [unclear].

INT: I'd like to go back to where you were born and talk a little bit about your family life. Did your family stay in the village that you lived?

SOL: Yes. My father and my mother, and I had an older brother and two sisters. They lived with us in a small village which consisted of about ten families. Not in that village; in that village was only about three Jewish families and then surrounding families within a radius of about maybe five, ten kilometers there were other Jews and they were coming every Friday night to our village for services. We provided the services in one of our, in one of the families lived there and they were normally every week, Friday night, no matter what the weather they used to come and we used to have services, Friday night and Saturday morning. And also on the holidays we used to hire somebody from the adjoining town of Miechow, a cantor which provided help to our so called synagogue. And that's about it.

INT: So the families took turns housing the congregation?

SOL: No, it was actually based in one of those rooms was a small family, which they had only one child and they had an extra room which they provided for that purpose.

INT: And was there a leader of the service?

SOL: That same person was knowledgeable in Jewish basic prayers and everything and that's what we provided.

INT: Did you have other relatives, aunts and uncles?

SOL: Yeah, I was living in a little house which my father owned, and he lived with his sister and her family, which they had one child and we were four children there in that building and then; if you call it a building. It was just there was a straw roof and everything and no running water and very primitive. This is the basic way of Polish living there in those villages. We did not own any ground, only a little bit which we planted some vegetables. And the other party who had that synagogue, I mean that room for the prayers had some ground and he was farming the ground. And this is, but my father was a merchant who was dealing in flour and he produced, he was buying grain, and making flour and he was selling the flour. And I had close family in that little town in Miechow - my father's brothers, and two brothers and sisters.

INT: How often did you see them?

SOL: Pretty often, almost every week we were going. It was always walking. We had to walk about, I would say, twenty miles, twenty kilometers. Actually is a little less than twenty miles. And we saw them pretty often. My father was walking there every week because he had to go to those merchants' marts. They had like twice a week.

INT: Were they like fairs or markets?

SOL: It was something like markets and the, I forgot already, the town had a place where they joined market where they, all the merchants used to come and selling their products. Farmers selling their products, potatoes and the vegetables. And merchants like my father, used to sell flour and whatever. And he was also buying cattle and for meat and from the farmers and he brought them to that market for sale. He was struggling terribly, and he didn't, he hardly made a living and very honest. And all those people from there they were living like a one family, and struggling, and honestly dealing with the Polish farmers, and struggling, and Friday night to make that Shabbat dinner and everything for the family.

INT: Did your father ever take you to market with him?

SOL: Yes, I was going very often. It was a very good challenge for me. We loved it because we had all the food which we didn't have at home. We were buying pickles over there and all the pastry in that town for which we didn't have at home normally. And we loved it; it was very nice.

INT: So he would take your brother and your sisters or just the two boys?

SOL: My brother was older. He was two years older than I was, and the sisters were still young. So mostly the sisters stayed at the home with the mother.

INT: So it was a time that you were by yourself with your father then.

SOL: Right, it depends. If we had school I couldn't go there, but if, there were sometimes where the schools were out and that's where we were going. I never missed school and tried to be on time everywhere.

INT: How did you spend Shabbat? You said, you know, you're struggling to get ready for the Shabbat meal. Was there company that came or your family?

SOL: No, we had our Shabbat dinner at the table with all the lighting, I mean lighting came, candles and prayers, whatever they were necessary for Shabbat dinner. And we had a good dinner always. It was not as here in the United States. We had a little chicken for seven people and some wine sometimes. Naturally it was different than every day's dinner. It was better, and it was more elaborate, and it was clean, and it was set at the table and normally wore white cloths, table cloths and everything Shabbat. And after that dinner we went to that, to the synagogue, and we had prayers and then we came home. And in the morning again, we had, didn't have any breakfast before Shabbat prayers. And after we came home so we had also a nice dinner. But it was prepared by Gentile people mostly. We kept in an oven, we put in those cholents and when we came for dinner it was ready. This was mostly as a routine which we are living with it for years.

INT: Is it something you looked forward to as a kid?

SOL: Yes. We were very happy. Whatever discomforts we had from the, we didn't really feel any problems with the Polish people surrounding us just before 1932, '33. I think it was a little bit maybe earlier when Pilsudski died. This was the leader of Poland and then a German origin, from German origin, a general by the name of [unclear] he took over Poland, and he was very antisemitic, and he allowed the rightist, the antisemitic programs. He didn't, he just [unclear] he just let them run and it came very hard on the Jews. They were just annoyed and throwing stones at our building, at our house at night and made it uncomfortable for us to exist over there. And in 1935 my father had to leave that house. He sold it almost for nothing. He couldn't stand it anymore. And he left to an adjoining town, the name of Wolbrom, and there were more Jews over there and it was a little easier to co-exist. And I left in 1935 to Krakow, to my uncle. He took me over because my mother passed away in 1935 and he, my father remarried. In Poland, unfortunately a stepmother was like an outcast. And she was very nice to us. And I and my brother left to Krakow, and we were supported by our uncle and I got a job over there as a mechanic in a..., and I was learning for. As a mechanic he, this poor uncle had to pay for me about five zlotys a week. It's like five dollars a week just to learn. I was sweeping the floors for two years, and after two years they allowed me to do certain job which I was perfect at it. And I was starting to make money, much more than my father used to make in his business. And my father lived in this small town and I lived in Krakow until the war broke out.

INT: And now how about grandparents? Were there any?

SOL: My grandparents, I had my father's father passed away in that small village before we left and before. It must have been in '34, 1934.

INT: Had your father grown up in that village?

SOL: My father actually as far as I remember, he was in that village before the World War I and then as World War I broke out they took him to Russia. And my father was serving in the Russian Army and he was there. They took them as children into the Czar's army and he was there all his life and my grandfather too. And as far as I know he came after the war and then he married in Poland again. And those are the family. But he was in the Czar's army. Also very, he told me a lot of time, very antisemitic but they didn't even know that they are Jews so whatever. And they were serving the army. He was there for about fifteen years in that army and my grandfather was all of his life in that Czar's army.

INT: So your father just happened to pick this village to move to after the army.

SOL: Apparently they had some ties to that village, there were more of our names surrounding and they surround....

[End Tape 1 - Side 1] [Begin Tape 1 - Side 2]

INT: I wanted to ask you if you would describe your father for me, what type of person he was and what your relationship was with him?

SOL: He was a tall person. He was about six foot six, very handsome. My mother was about five foot four, very short. That's what I came from. My brother was about six foot six, very handsome man, and he died. And as the war broke out my brother, we were running away from Krakow, and he died on the way East and I came back to Krakow. So my father was, he had a soul they called him like he was almost like a fool as good as he was. They called him like "Jacob the fool" because he was so good. He could give away everything and even hurting the family as good as he was. So, and he made a living. They were people who were much worse off than we were. And he had, everything was a project for my father, I mean for every family over there. When a child needed a pair of shoes it was a whole project like to build a house over here. They had to go to a shoe maker which was in that building where we were praying was a shoemaker. He was making our shoes for the family and for ourselves. The weather over there was terrible and those shoes were taking a horrible beating all the time, because it was muddy during the summer, no paved roads and no cars, nothing. Just a horse and a wagon. It was a tough life, but we didn't know anything better and we were happy with it.

INT: What special times do you remember with your father?

SOL: During the holiday always dressed up in a black, long coat. It was a traditional; he did not wear a beard. He was shaved and always hat and we had to wear a hat too, the children. And he was very good to our family. He tried to give us everything he could, but he had difficulties to meet the necessities. And working very hard, always walking, they had no locomotion. Sometimes he was renting like a horse and a wagon, and he went out and takes some merchandise to the town to every week. Otherwise he was walking everything and was no other way then to walk to the people he wanted to meet.

INT: Do you remember his ever talking to you about something special or giving you advice about things?

SOL: No. As a whole in Europe and Poland especially the children, up to about thirteen, fourteen years old there was a common way of living that the children were just going to school and teach some. We had a man coming in and teaching us Hebrew once a week and just helping our mother. With no running water, we had to bring new water and bring certain things to help our father also carry certain things to the...; we had a little shop like a little barn where you had to accumulate all this stuff he was buying. And this for a man that was always carrying big bags, I mean those with flour, a hundred pounds, a hundred fifty pounds. And we didn't realize anything else because everybody was doing the same thing. It was, always talking about Russia mostly, how they lived in Russia and all those areas where far, far away and in that, with that frost and mostly in the army. And that life was their life. And during the war those Cossacks used to come, and then my father had showed me all those metals which he got from the Czar's army and as they came back to Poland they tried to - sometimes they were rough. Those Cossacks were terrible. They were raping women and they were just killing everybody who were in their way. So my father and my grandfather used to go out with those metals. They thought that they were going to get a preference and they were beaten just the same. And they survived the war, the World War I and were they in that, in that after the war. Actually the Polish government was very receptive to the Jews. They were not bothering them and they were

trying to accommodate everybody the best they could. But after 1933 it started, you know, with Germany and they were the youngsters, like over here, the Skinheads and somehow that where they persecuting the Jews especially.

INT: What was your mom like?

SOL: My mother was very nice and a mother and in Poland in this type of family was always like a second class citizen, unfortunately. The man was the man of the house. Always my father had the word and he did everything. I did not realize the difference but now I can see that he was the man of the family, and he was doing everything possible, and the wife always tried to accommodate the family, and working hard at home, and trying to cook, to wash the wash and do everything in the most primitive ways without any running water and everything. You can imagine to prepare hot water for a bath and to prepare everything in time for the kids to go to school and come back and everything. The kids to school they were walking. It was a walk of about an hour to the school in bad weather, good weather. And I remember we were walking in this type of weather and from 8:00 in the morning 'til 8:00 in the evening. The first two years, three years I had about five, ten minutes of walk. Then I had an hour's of walk from about ten years, eleven years to fourteen.

INT: Do you know what type of education your parents were able to get? You know if your father was in the army?

SOL: I don't think he had too much education. He could write his name; he could write some words. In Jewish he was writing pretty well and Yiddish, but in Polish he could only do limited things but he was very sharp. I still can remember he asked me a question once. I was in the fourth grade and he asked me, "Listen, how much is 67 times 30?" And I took a piece of paper and tried to figure out. After two seconds he said, "All right, I don't need it anymore." He knew it right there like a computer in his head. Figures, this was just like a computer. And every time he asked me the most difficult questions by the time I worked it out on paper he knew it already in his head. So that's why those things I still remember. As a matter of fact, I do the same thing even now. I don't use a computer; I don't use, I use everything in my head. Doing my business since I came over here in 1948 I never made a note of any telephone number; I still have it in my head. I never made a note of any customer desires and everything. I remembered everything. I was building a hundred homes at one time and I remembered every little, every appointment, everything. I started to write down now about ten years ago I started to write down something. Even now I don't, I don't have the courage to write down and I forget certain things. But I had the same, the same capabilities in my head as my father had.

INT: And where did he learn to write Yiddish?

SOL: They had, probably they had help at home. My grandfather used to hire a melamed [teacher, ed.] and he used to come to home and teach him Yiddish writing and everything. Yiddish at home was more popular than Polish. In Krakow where I was later on before the war Polish was more popular even in Jewish families, religious Jewish families than Jewish.

INT: How about your mother? Did she have any type of Jewish education?

SOL: Yeah, she had the same Jewish education. They all were reading the prayer books.

INT: So do you think a melamed, her father hired a melamed?

SOL: Yeah, probably. My mother came from about fifty, sixty miles away, in another small town.

INT: What was her maiden name?

SOL: Yakabovich, and I still have her brother's children. One cousin survived the war, and she lives in New York, and I'm still in touch with them and everything.

INT: So what would you say your parents' religious feeling was?

SOL: They were pretty religious. There was only one type of religion in the Jewish family, either once you were a Jew you had to conform with all the necessities of the Jewish tradition. Everyone was preparing the same way the Shabbat. Everyone was going to the same prayers, never left and all always all the rituals and if somebody got their bar mitzvah or there was no bas mitzvahs over there, was only bar mitzvahs. And weddings or children circumcisions and everything, all the Jewish traditions were conformed and they were all. As a matter of fact that my father never allowed me to stay in school at the religious, we had about four times a week a religious hour where a priest used to come in and teach religion. I had to go out and stay outside during that hour. This was the order of my father, and it was not pleasant at all. After the religious teachings and the school, mainly at Christmas time it was very uncomfortable for me. I was the only Jew in school, and especially at Easter when they were teaching that the Jewish people crucified Christ, and there was a very unpleasant results that sometimes I got beaten up and everything else. So this is, thanks G-d, that we have over here a separation of school and state. I only hope that the other religious, the Christian Coalition won't succeed because the same thing. The religion did not help a bit in Poland to quell the massacres what the Germans did. As a matter of fact the church was a big contributor to the Holocaust.

INT: Knowing every spring when Easter was coming that you were going to be the target of their hatred, what would you be thinking going to school those days?

SOL: Oh, I had to go to school and pray for the best. Yeah, it was not easy but every time the neighbors are after '33, '34, going to church they were throwing stone at the Jewish houses wherever next to the road.

INT: How about that boy that would take notes for you or help you out when you weren't in school on Shabbat, did he participate in?

SOL: No, I would say no, the mainly the children what I was going. I had a few friends, they were very close. They didn't mind me coming to their house and coming to, to be very close to

them and then he was just as close, but they had reservations. It was like a strange friendship, like always the barrier of religion was very evident anytime and every time.

INT: Did you all ever talk about it?

SOL: Not exactly. We lived with it, and we lived with a certain fear, and that fear was so common and overwhelming that we didn't, we didn't just speak about it and not talk about it. We were like outcasts to the Polish people and especially with the teachings of the religion and the crucifixion of Christ as a, was a very important point where the hatred to the Jews who were so great. And it was not as visible as after Hitler came to power.

INT: Did you ever visit this boy during Christmas time at his home?

SOL: No. I never, I never was invited to see Christmas tree or something else. No, we didn't, it was, it was very, only, the only time I had close relations with all the boys in school and everything is on the soccer field where we played soccer where we had any gymnastic participations and everything. It was about the closest relations between all the school children and myself. At home there was just a separation. We lived our way and they lived their way and naturally in the streets outside in the summer we could go out and play somehow, very very and not too often but this is what our friendship participations were.

INT: Were your mother's parents living?

SOL: Yes.

INT: Did you get to visit with them often?

SOL: No, they were away in a different town. We met them a few times but not often.

INT: Do you have any memories of being with them, what they were like?

SOL: Yes, we met them maybe through my children ages; I met them maybe four or five times and I remember them. I still remember them and it was nothing special like, it was very close when they came to our house and we met, it was a very close meeting and whatever. But we had very close relations with our friends in the neighboring town. When they came to our house it was always when they came we had to provide them with food, and make a dinner for them and everything. And it was the same way when we came over there; they provided everybody with food and everything which was pretty tough for them. Now I can realize they didn't have enough to eat themselves and they really provided food for everybody, whoever came.

INT: What were the occasions that you would get together?

SOL: Mostly on Sundays.

INT: Oh.

SOL: Yeah, mostly on Sundays, almost every Sunday, either they came over here and they were also the same way as we used to come to their town for purchasing our necessities the other merchants from, and some of our friends and families used to come to our town because they were coming and dealing over there, dealing with cattle or something. So whenever they came for those purposes they slept over in our house and everything else, yeah. So those are, those were the common things. If a Jewish man from town came to our village the only way, there were no hotels, there were no motels. They didn't go to Gentiles to sleep over so they had to come. And sometimes we had three, or four, or five people and we had only a small house, a little kitchen, and the one bedroom and that's about it. And they were sleeping, I remember on the floor; we made a bed with straw and this is – was the time where they slept and this is how they, how we lived.

INT: What was it like for you as a kid? Was it an exciting time to have these people?

SOL: Yeah it was a, we liked company. You know children like company in general, and we were very excited when they used to come. They used to bring us a candy; they used to bring us something from town that was a little different than we had at home. So the children when they get something they like it.

INT: Now you mentioned there were friends and relatives.

SOL: Yeah, there was, there were some relatives of ours.

INT: Are these your father's side?

SOL: Yeah, from our, our mother's side and my father's side, right. They lived in that, in that town over there, Miechow. They had a few hundred Jewish families so it was a bigger concentration and they used to come and deal with the same people as my father was dealing. I mean not the same exactly, but they were, we were only about ten Jewish families. But you had a few hundred Polish families, farmers, and merchants and everything in those little towns.

INT: How did your parents interact with each other? You mentioned that your father's word went but do you recall any times where your mother didn't agree or where they had to discuss something maybe involving you or some decision for the family?

SOL: Yeah, there was some, some kind of once in a time some quarrelings between themselves but it was nothing serious, you know. Something happened that my father brought something from town and it didn't fit right or didn't work right so my mother used to say you should know better and everything. It was not so easy over there just to go and exchange things like over here. Once you bought something you were stuck with it, and I remember I had a pair of shoes which they didn't fit. I was wearing a small pair of shoes. Those were the things you had to live with. But we survived somehow.

INT: How about with you, how did your mother treat you being a son in the family? Was it a special position?

SOL: No, I had my brother and I had two sisters. We were equally more or less treated. There was no preference for a son or a daughter. No, there was no special. We lived together all right. We never had discrepancies or fight between ourself. My father had that strong hand in the family if somebody did not behave right he got spanked, and a matter of fact at school we got our beating on our hands with a ruler and they were bringing us up straight. And if I came home with a complaint that my teacher gave me some punishment on my hands so I thought I was going to get sympathy from my father. So sometimes, and I still remember when he said, "How many times did you get on your hand?" So he had two. So you have to get two over here too. So next time I didn't even mention that I had problems. So this was the way of living in our town and this is how they brought us up. And, but this was our way of living over there I think for all of our neighbors and everybody, they were doing the same thing.

INT: Would you get more sympathy if you went to your mother?

SOL: Yes, I had a little more sympathy from my mother but we didn't have any particular problems that we had to go and scream all the time and come for pity from my mother or my father. We were not angels. The young children who are rough over there too and we did not behave one hundred percent right what the parents did they didn't want us to do, but we followed our schooling, we followed our chores at home. We helped a lot at home; we had to go and we had to plant potatoes in the field and we had to take them up. If the parents told us to go somewhere to the store or something we were running. There was not such a thing as refusing, I don't feel like or I can't go. And the father said do you have to go you have to go so you have to go.

INT: Do you remember any special times with your mother, being with her or doing something special for her or with her?

SOL: Oh yes, when she was washing her wash it was a heavy job for her and we used to bring water from the river or from a neighbor of ours had a well. And this was only, he only allowed us to take it from that well water for drinking so we got that bucket that day or whatever. The other water from the, it was a clean river next to where we were within 150 feet so we used to get that water. And it was also drinkable water, it was clean, nice and clean. And we had to bring the water and then dispose of the dirty water when she washed and so forth 'cause she couldn't handle everything. It was really tough. And it's about it. We had to bring some wood for the stove and everything else.

INT: Did she bake her own challah for Shabbas?

SOL: Everything it was baking her challahs, baking her cakes, baking everything in that one oven in the kitchen. It used to be those traditional ovens where you have, where they did everything, cooking and baking and everything.

INT: Did you all ever get to help with baking the bread?

SOL: Yeah, sometimes she made us cut some cookies or something you know, with those cookie cutters or something, a helper and it was a tough life for the mother. I think the mother was working much harder than the father. And they were taking everything as granted, you know, this had to be that way and this is how it was.

INT: How about holidays? Did the family, did relatives come together in one?

SOL: Sometimes but mainly everybody had his own holiday at home. There was not, certain occasions sometimes we just got together without our families and had the bar mitzvah. And there was that birthday or something so we got together in their house and all of us did the best we could.

INT: So did you have your bar mitzvah in this town?

SOL: Yeah, I had the bar mitzvah. The whole bar mitzvah I had a piece of herring after the bar mitzvah and I had a piece of cake or something.

INT: Can you describe it for me from your studying for the bar mitzvah?

SOL: There was nothing special study, only said the prayer.

INT: How did you learn it?

SOL: From that melamed. He used to come, and I don't say that I'm perfect in Hebrew, no, not far from perfect. We were praying, and we were praying our way with a lot of mistakes, and my father the same way and even the grandfather. But we were trained and there was some, maybe from all the minyan what we had to maybe two, three people which knew a little more perfect Hebrew reading than we did. Because we did not have the education which we really had. I mean we know Jewish words, I mean the Jewish; we can read in Jewish more or less than the Hebrew but not as fluently as we should.

INT: So what happened in preparation for the bar mitzvah? Was it something where you got special clothes or was...?

[Tape 1 - End Side 2] [Begin Tape 2 - Side 1]

INT: This is tape two with Sol Sultanik on May 5, 1994. Sol is describing his bar mitzvah. Do you have a few more minutes? Is it okay?

SOL: Yeah. So anyway, the bar mitzvah was different from another prayer that my father used to get an aliyah, and then I had an aliyah, and then the next day it was only the same thing. My father had an aliyah, and I had an aliyah and this was a bar mitzvah. No more. No reading

Torahs or whatever. It was only a bar mitzvah and I read the prayers at the Torah and that's the only, that's the only thing which was different than, than any other day.

INT: And did your mother prepare any special foods for afterwards?

SOL: Yes, we had some special cookies or everything and then at the synagogue reception they had some...a challah and they had some herring. I don't even remember. It was so little that I don't even remember the difference between a bar mitzvah and not a bar mitzvah. And there was some wine, and a bottle wine, and some cookies, and some cake and mainly herring was always as a necessity as a, I mean a, I just forget, just a tradition. A traditional foods. So mostly the traditional foods were in that bar mitzvah.

INT: But how did you feel about it? Was it something special for you?

SOL: It was a little bit that I had a sense of accomplishment or whatever. But it was nothing special. They don't make a bar mitzvah like they make over here, almost like a wedding. But it was in these circumstances and in the way of living; it was a little bit different than the average. It was not so many bar mitzvahs around there. We had only ten families and it was only about two, three boys in the whole ten family, which were in that age. And everybody more or less, there were some more well to do families over there so they, they got another special thing like another piece of cake, something separately or some doughnuts or something made themselves. The women, they used to make everything themselves and in general it was not a special event as a bar mitzvah. It was something you had the thirteen years, and you had an aliyah, and your father had an aliyah, and if your grandfather were there he had an aliyah and that's about it. And this was the end of it. And we made also, it was also common to make a Havdalah in the evening on Saturday. So you had another piece of herring or something on that point. So those three events you had Friday evening, you had Saturday morning and you had a Havdalah and something to drink afterwards and that's it in the time of a bar mitzvah.

INT: Did your father say anything to you? Did he treat you differently after your bar mitzvah?

SOL: No, it wasn't anything special. He said that you arrived to that point and mainly a lot of times families, merchants used to have and used to say that you are now a man, and you are capable to do business and you have to help in the business. After that date you have to produce and go sometimes on your own as you are a man, and you have to provide and make a living more or less like your father does. And some parents gave you the opportunity to do it and a lot of times the children had to go out and look on their own and become a part of, of contributing to the way of living and it was not easy. I remember like today at fourteen years old I didn't know how I can contribute all of a sudden to a way of going out and get a job. There was not jobs around where you can go out and get. I used to go out to a neighbor, a farmer, and I told him that I like to help so he, I used to help maybe two, three times a week. He told me come over and I was working in the field and doing what they doing; he showed me how. And then he brought out some food, which we were always hungry, always anxious to eat and it was tasty when the farmer brought out some cottage cheese and bread, fresh bread baked by the same farmer. And I enjoyed that. It was really a challenge for us too. And I was very happy when he,

there was no money involved. Sometimes he gave us maybe a few cents, but in general just for food and whoever worked there used to get the food, additional food.

INT: Was this a Polish farmer?

SOL: Yeah, Polish. There were not too many Jewish farmers around there. Those Jewish farmers could not; they were not equipped like the Polish farmers who had horses, and cattle and barns. There were some wealthy Polish farmers. There was a wealthy Jewish manufacturer over there. I mean he was producing the flour, and he had a mill and they were pretty wealthy. They were a little bit different, but they did not stay close to the poor peasants of the Jews and they were helping once in a while. I remember Purim we used to run there in order to get our doughnuts from the mill, whatever. And they were helping as much as they could but not enough, I think, according to their wealth and the poorness of the other people.

INT: What do you remember about your grandfather? Did he ever sit and tell you stories about the Russian Army?

SOL: Yeah, he was also [unclear] Russian Army and how were they used to live, and how cold it was in Russia that time, and how they [unclear] for us and they seemed to like that life that time in Russia, the army life. And they were mostly the families where they went to school, and they went to everything in the army and they used to stay in the army, got married in the army and everything. The army was your whole life.

INT: Now did he live in your home, your grandfather?

SOL: Yes, he lived with us, yeah.

INT: Were you close with him?

SOL: Very close, yeah. He was a very nice man, and he was very close and very good to us. But he was helpless, he couldn't do too much, he was old and he couldn't. Normally he was cutting wood or doing something. Then at the later age I remember when they took him to the town because he needed a doctor, he needed some help, and this is where he went and this is where he died over there. It was sad. A death in a family or a friend's was very tragic and very very fearsome and to go to a cemetery was just terrible. I know you felt like you had pins on your skin when you would just approach the cemetery. Was a very fearsome and a very, just strange feeling, you know, for everybody I guess but especially for children.

INT: I was going to say, yeah.

SOL: Yes, children, the experience was terrible.

INT: How old were you when your grandfather died?

SOL: I, maybe I was about eleven, twelve and (pause) then my mother passed away when I was about thirteen, and it was the most tragic thing happened that time. I remember I came from the cemetery home, sat on that bench and I realized this is it. We are going to be by ourselves. And it was a rough time. But after two years my father remarried, and then I left the house all together and I went to Krakow.

INT: And was your brother home at the time when your mother died?

SOL: Yes, he was home too and then he went. He was working in a bakery in this little town over there near [unclear] and I came to visit him and I saw how hard he works over there. They put him on a attic where it was so hot and terrible to sleep. So I talked to the uncle, and we said, "All right, let's bring him over there," and he came to Krakow and he was with us.

INT: Oh, I see.

SOL: And I was already having a job there. I was making some money so I lived like an aristocrat over there already, and he was still a peasant. So....

INT: I want to ask you when your mother died, how did it work out taking care of everything in the house and dealing with her death? Did the sisters help out? Who took over her chores? Who helped get things going again in the family?

SOL: Yeah, my father had to cook. My father had to prepare some foods for us and naturally the children, my sister was at that time about twelve years old, and she was only a year younger than I was, and she was helping out but she had to go to school too. It was not easy. That's why he got mostly married from necessities in order to keep the house going.

INT: Do you remember any discussions about religion or G-d when your mother died in the family?

SOL: Yeah. We were all, I mean we were all in that religion and the Jewish religion is something where I had to go every day and say Kaddish, because I was already like thirteen years old that time. And I said Kaddish every day, in the morning, the evening. And it was pretty, everybody looked at me like a pity, you know, that we were orphans and whatever. And so after a while everybody goes back to their own lives and we were too. We were together and then after my father remarried she was doing everything like my mother, naturally. And, but we had more proper discipline. We did not dare to say anything to her that everything that something is wrong. I remember the difference was that my mother was home and we had some coffee. We had milk and sugar with it. She was drinking the coffee without milk, without sugar so we had to do the same thing and we hated it. And in certain ways the way she prepared food was different than my mother, and we didn't like it as much and we had to do whatever she wanted you to do. There was no way to say that I don't like it this way. We didn't have the courage to say and we accepted everything which came from her side. But I was not long, I was only a couple weeks maybe with her and I left. And but my sisters were with her, and I know

that they had some difficulties, but I was on my own in Krakow about twenty-five miles away from that village and I had a better living then with my uncle and aunt.

INT: Now did you live with them in their home while you were working there?

SOL: Yeah, right.

INT: And how many children did they have?

SOL: There was an uncle, his sister, two sisters and his mother. They were not married.

INT: Oh, I see. I see.

SOL: Yeah, it was a house where I, where I was. Then my, finally when I brought my brother, then eventually I brought one of my sisters too, the older sister was with us too in Krakow.

INT: Were you like the spokesman for the family? It sounds like you were.

SOL: No, I was maybe more of a respect because I accomplished something more than the others did. Like my uncle, I used to work with him in the same store. We were building, it was a, they were selling sewing machines and bicycles, motorcycles, and everything and then I was, I had a little motorcycle to ride around. I was a big shot over there.

INT: Michael has a motorcycle. You could go riding together.

SOL: Yeah? Oh, this was a challenge over there. I had the bicycle all the time which was not a common thing in Poland either. If you owned a bicycle you were a big shot already. So I was really doing good but I worked hard. I worked twelve hours in the store and then I got a little sandwich and on the bicycle I ran to school three times a week in the evening. By the time I came home it was about eleven o'clock at night and then seven o'clock you got up again to work. It was not easy but I was happy. I had a busy day and but I was accomplishing. I was very good. I was producing in that shop, in the first year; I did twice as much work as the people who worked there for fifteen years. For some reason I was very handy and I was very, I caught up with everything very fast, and I was capable and that's why I was, I was doing very good. They liked me over there in the store and fortunately it was only for four or five years. About three years I worked there and the first two years I wasn't doing nothing, but they had like apprenticeship that you have to clean the store, and do everything and no pay. No pay at all. And then after I saw a little pay I was more than happy.

INT: Now how often did you get to see your father?

SOL: I was coming home for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kipper, I usually went home to my father. But then he moved out of that village and he went to another town so I only saw him about once a year, coming for the high holidays, that's about only, only in the summer. Because in wintertime I had a hard time to get there. It was snowy and everything. And later on as he lived

in the other town I could go by bus or something, but otherwise I took a bicycle and I was traveling on a bicycle there. But it was only when it was nice weather. But if it was muddy I couldn't ride a bicycle there, so if the high holidays came in the good weather I was lucky.

INT: But did you ever go to synagogue in Krakow?

SOL: Not as a routine. We didn't belong to any. My uncle, we just went to one synagogue over there. I remember I liked a synagogue where there was a German synagogue and it was not a conservative

INT: The liberal one.

SOL: It was a liberal. A liberal more, we liked it much more.

INT: Oh, interesting.

SOL: And then for high holidays we went to a conservative synagogue.

INT: Now did you have Shabbat at your uncle's house? Did they observe that?

SOL: They did observe Shabbat but it wasn't in a religious way. We had a Shabbat dinner, and we lit the candles, and said the prayers, lit the candles and that's about it. But we did not go to Friday night services or Saturday morning services. If I don't, I didn't work anywhere, sometimes I worked on Saturday in the store, and if we didn't work we went to that synagogue where they had an organ and they had some which we liked a little more.

INT: And it was a rabbi that came from Germany?

SOL: Yeah, yeah it was a German rabbi and everything and it was pretty nice. And then they had a lot of synagogues otherwise in the high holidays we went and we stood in the synagogue for a whole day.

INT: Was it hard for you to adjust to working on Shabbat after going, you know being?

SOL: No it wasn't, it was a routine and I personally, I was the first one what I was more or less like a rebel where I took off my hat and I was walking outside and inside without a hat and it was about maybe when I was sixteen years old and I was, I had plans in the Krakow with the other and they were about the same way. They didn't wear any hats, and I was proud that I could get in and do the same thing but I was not. When I came home to my father I wouldn't dare to go without a hat. But in Krakow itself it was more progressive over there, more assimilated than in any other little towns. I wouldn't dare to go out in that small town where my father used to live, later on, without the hat and everything. It had to be the regular Jewish way.

INT: Did you ever talk to your father about that, about the difference in Krakow?

SOL: Yes, we didn't communicate too much, we didn't have any telephones to talk to.

INT: No, but I mean when you were together?

SOL: Together we...

INT: ever talked about the changing ways or?

SOL: No, he realized he was a couple times in Krakow too, and he saw our way of living, and maybe he didn't like it as much but he didn't say anything. He had respect for me that I exist and he was maybe in a way glad that I left the house and I went somewhere where I could do more for myself than over there in that little village. I would have probably landed in the same situation and be the same as he was, which he had a very hard life and I had an easier life and I made more than he did. So he had some kind of a respect for me, and our relations were very good and the way he handled the whole family is a little different. He felt a little guilty that his second wife was not probably treating us the same way as our mother did, and he felt a little guilty and it hurt him maybe in some way, but he couldn't do too much about it. There was no way he could just turn her around and be the same as the mother, and this was the life why we actually disappeared. And then he had a child with her, and naturally that child was treated much different than the children of his. And it probably hurt him too, but he couldn't do too much about it either. So we were all grown children, and we were almost like on our own so my brother did the work in Krakow for somebody too, and he was older than I was and we belonged to a Jewish organization like what they call Hapo...

INT: Hapo'alei Hazion.

SOL: Yeah, Hapo'alei Zion, right and we were there in the organization usually on Sundays and everything, so we had friends in that.

INT: Let me write that down. Did your parents ever express any dreams they had for you, you know, like for a different life or for you to aspire to something?

SOL: No, and unfortunately in Poland, especially, the parents themselves were (pause) in a way expecting from the children at fourteen years old to be independent and bring help to home. And the only criticism the children got, like I got in the beginning, that "Look at this boy over there, he is doing great, and you are sitting home, and you can't get a job for yourself or you can't do anything on your own." So that's why you know, as sometimes I got frustrated because what can you do if you are not guided by a parent what to start and you go out on your own and finding something the parent themselves is not capable to make a right living, how can I do? But some children were capable to do something maybe better than I was able to do, because they were in a environment where the jobs were more or less more available and more of a way they could get into it. When I was a job was not available to just to be different; how can he do it as a youngster at fourteen years old? And there was no schooling anymore. In Krakow I got schooling. I had to pay for it but I'm glad I was able to get some. And I am mechanically I got very capable; I was capable to catch up to the schooling, whatever they gave us and it helped me

in our, in my way to pick up the job what I was doing. And a matter of fact I was better maybe than the other ones who were working over there.

INT: I think we will stop unless there is anything that you want to add today.

SOL: No, I think that's already about....

[Tape 2 - End Side 1] [Tape 2 - Side 2 Blank] [Begin Tape 3 - Side 1]

INT: This is an interview with Solomon Sultanik on May 26, 1994. Sol, I wanted to go back and ask you a couple of questions about your family. When you were young, your family, you are growing up, when you were young when you had a problem was there someone you could go to, to speak with, to confide in? A friend or a relative?

SOL: Yeah, we had distant family like uncles and aunts, but in general I wouldn't say with our living that we had any problems that you had to go and confront somebody else. We are always tried to resolve everything at home. And in general there were no problems. We had a hard life but no other problems.

INT: Okay, I was thinking more just you know, as a kid growing up if you had a problem with a friend or something was bothering you was there anyone that you could go and talk to for advice, that sort of thing? More personal, not so much, you know, family involvement.

SOL: That I can say any problems we had with friends or so were the problems my parents had too, because we are only limited amount of Jews living in that area and we all had the same problems that we were actually we had a harder life because of that that we were Jews and we are always pointed out and really persecuted, throwing stone at us and not to give us that same chance to live as the other people lived. That's the only problems we really had.

INT: Okay, tell me a little bit about your friends, what were they like, what kind of things did you play when you were a young boy?

SOL: My major play was in sports, which we were involved with the Gentile boys, and they treated me at those baseball or, not baseball, mainly soccer, and basketball, and other jumping and running which we had in school, and I was very good at it so they were always more or less respected me because I was good. And this, and this particular point I had a lot of friends from school. I mean the total school and the total class was involved in sports. So I was with them, and I felt more comfortable at those points, and sometimes after school and the evenings I used to go to the same grounds we were playing together, and we enjoyed ourselves mainly at sports. In school itself I had no problems. Sometimes, you know during the holidays and everything I felt out of line, whatever, and otherwise it was not too many major problems. Only before the war the anti-Semitism became a little more rampant and they were really bothering us more than the years before.

INT: Were there any of the Jewish kids your age in school?

SOL: I had probably one or so from a different classes. I was the only one in my class. And they had the same problem. The other boys and girls, whoever I went to school had the same problems as I had, because of there are only one or two mainly in a class, Jewish people, with a class and probably of sixty, seventy children.

INT: Do you have any memories of a special teacher or someone who had an influence on you or maybe an older kid that you admired?

SOL: Yeah, I admired a lot a boy who was sitting next to me and he was really a brain. He was really good. I was probably next to him, but he was better than I was. And he respected me, and I respected him and we were pretty good, only in class. Nothing, because he lived probably a couple of miles away from me, so in class he was probably one of the best friends. And then I had another friend who lived maybe three houses away from me; he was also very close to me. And I didn't have any problem. They didn't treat me any different. I used to come to his house, he used to come to my house. And not too many friends because I don't know too many people there in general. The fifty, sixty students came within a radius of about ten miles and every child had to walk to school. There was no transportation, anything. It took me about an hour to walk to school and an hour back regardless of weather and no paved roads, nothing. Really mud and all kinds of problems. So this was not easy in general but we did it. We never missed a day in school so unless the school was closed.

INT: What did you admire about this boy that sat next to you?

SOL: He had a good character, he minded the school, he was a good student and I was too, and I liked to keep up with him and I admired him because he had good potentials. As a matter of fact when he finishes school the Jewish students didn't have a chance to go to higher schooling and he was admitted to a higher, to a university because from public school they used to take us right to a university. There was no high school or something. We had seven, eight years of public school six days a week and then from there you went right to a university. And the other boy went to the University of Krakow and I felt a little bit left out because I couldn't go. It was a tough time to admit a Jewish student to a university that time. And secondly we couldn't afford it either. The Jewish people who lived in those villages and everywhere, they didn't have a choice to go.

INT: Did you ever bump into him in Krakow?

SOL: No, I didn't even look for him, as a matter of fact. I was busy with myself and in Krakow I had a good, a better life. Was more Jewish people and a matter of fact was one of the largest concentration of Jews in Krakow. And I was working with Jews, and I was mostly with the Jewish friends, and worked with the Gentiles too but with Jewish friends and we had a much better time. Not comparing, not in comparison to those livings which I had as a small child.

INT: Were there any teachers that encouraged you?

SOL: The teachers in general were good and they were, we respected them very much. As a matter of fact we used to get spanked by the, not with a ruler, over our hands when we did something wrong, or we didn't do our homework right. So we were punished and we respected them very much. A teacher was like our G-d in school and the only one I didn't have too much contact is with a priest who was teaching religious schooling, I mean, for the other children and I was not present at this hour. It was about two, three hours a week which I, just religion, and I didn't have that. My father always tell me, "You get out of the class when they have this kind of school." All right.

INT: Okay. I wanted to ask you a little bit about your father. When you would go walk with him to the market

SOL: Right.

INT: did you ever have any conversations with him or any interaction? Was it a special time for you?

SOL: No, it wasn't too much of a togetherness with my father. The only time when we went on a Sunday where I had no school and he was going to the same town. It was about I would say an hour and a half walk to that town which was in Miechow. It was about, I would say about, twenty kilometers which we used to make it in about an hour or two, an hour, an hour and a half, two hours walking. And during the week when my father used to go more often, they had some farmers who used to go with a horse and wagon and this is how he traveled. But on a Sunday we had to go, we had to walk, and the conversation usually as you know the, my father used to go a little slower, and I was to run ahead of him and look for certain things, some animals, some other things. And I was always much faster than my father used to walk which you find it over here too that the children run ahead of you. And we were talking normally and, but nothing of a way where I can remember was really substantial, nothing he really shared with me in his private life and mine. In general we had a very hard life, and he tried to accommodate our needs and he had a rough time to do it. And I can really respect him now what he really did for us because it was not easy. Everything he brought he had to carry. Everything he did you had to work for, and everything he made monetarily, money, he had to work for it very very hard. And somehow he did it and he did it well. And he was not the only one. All the families did the same way and they tried to make their needs meet. And they are, they were all very serious at it, and there was not such a competition that one wanted to outdo the others, because they were all mainly it in the same stage and in the same condition or whatever. My father was a very nice and good man, very respected by others, and he helped everybody he could and he taught us the same way. We were always cooperative if somebody asked us from other neighbors or other Jewish family that we should help them out in something, there was no question that we refused or did something. We had to, we did it what we were told to do, and we did it well, and we did it respectfully. And we respected each other and we lived like a mainly like a one large family with the other families together. Very close, either they were related or not related but in general I met one after the war, he came from the same area and I called him a cousin, he called me a cousin which we were not related at all. And we were very close.

INT: What is the message about life that you feel you got from your father?

SOL: I would say that we listened to him, we respected him and we helped him as much as the children, because I was already twelve, thirteen years old when I remember everything. And then the persecutions were bothering them very hard because they were all Sundays when the Gentiles used to go to church they used to throw stone at us and at the house at night. We had to close up all the windows, and we really we lived in a scared and fearful environment which was really sometimes unbearable. And we just were sentenced to a life where we couldn't get forward and we couldn't go backwards. And finally it was unbearable to a point where he moved out, my father to, I was in Krakow already there and he moved out, to another town where he lived a little bit more safer than he lived in that village.

INT: I'd like to ask you a little bit about your grandfather, the one that lived with you.

SOL: Yeah.

INT: This was your father's father, I believe. What messages do you think he gave to you about life and what kind of person to be?

SOL: Well, he was mostly talking about the living in Russia because he was in the Czar's army and he always told us stories which were very interested to children what they did. He was riding a horse, he was doing that, he was doing this, they were in the war in the Turkish War how they lived that through. And mainly from one city to the other he was all the way up near Siberia there and in certain towns. I remember a cities, Kerkutsk [?], like I see it now and, and always telling us most of those stories. And he had the same hard life and mostly I would say the grandfather suffered a little bit more even, because there was not such a thing as a nursing home like they do over here. You had to be with the family and he was a little bit disabled. He couldn't walk right. He couldn't work or anything. And thank G-d he was really in good shape more or less. He could still speak and move around, but sometimes I noticed that the family itself, whatever that poor guy did sometimes, it was wrong. The family couldn't, it was always in the way of the family, because the living was so congested and so tight that sometimes he was in the way of other, of the other family. But there was no way, I don't know, sometimes I was also in the way of the other family. It was really a very small apartment and wherever you sat down somewhere, and maybe it was the wrong place or you lie down somewhere, and maybe it was the wrong time or the wrong place. And this was the way those poor people lived that time. And then as he started to feel worse and he needed some doctors' attentions which we didn't have in there, there was not doctors around, so he went to his other son's house which he lived in that town where he used to go. And this is where he was and this is where he passed away from there.

INT: Why do you think he lived with your father for those years before he got really ill?

SOL: I believe he didn't have maybe the accommodations or the roots over there in the town. He probably liked better that village because he lived there in the younger years and naturally wherever the younger years brought him to the old age, that's where they usually stood. They

usually didn't go out to another family. He knew every corner of the house, he knew everything so this was I would say traditionally more accepted that the parents, wherever they lived together with some of the close members, this is where they stood together I would say. I don't know.

INT: Did he ever talk about your grandmother?

SOL: Yeah.

INT: Had she died before you were born?

SOL: I didn't, I don't remember her. I didn't, I think she passed away much much before, you know. When my grandfather died I was probably about eleven years old or maybe ten, so I don't really remember his wife and yeah, there was some talk about it. I had some pictures to look at and just like anything else it's just nothing spectacular which was brought up or something. He used to say Kaddish every year, whatever, whenever he could, and this was the only memories I really remember.

INT: Can you describe your mother for me, her personality, what she was like?

SOL: My mother was, my father was very tall. He was about six-six. My mother was short. She was about I would say five-five, four. And they lived well together. There was no specific, I mean like discrepancies or anything. And my mother worked very, very hard at home to accommodate the children. There was not such a thing that we could take a bath every, every day or every week. It was probably sometimes a month by the time I could take a bath. Had some kind of a big barrel, and put in some water, and she had to cook that water on the stove with the wood, and it was not easy. And especially had four children, and by the time she started to give a bath it was a whole day's business. And naturally the older children had to help, had to bring the water, and had to help bring the wood, and make the water warm and everything else. And there was maybe every three, four weeks we went, went to town and we went to a shvitz to a bath where we used to go and this is, I enjoyed that too. And then my father and everything was like a tradition on that, every couple weeks or so we went, and not all together but I used to go with my father, or my brother used to go at another time and so on. But the sisters usually didn't go. That was not for girls. It was only for men, and but nobody was thought about it. In the summertime we had like a river or something, so we used to go and wash ourselves, or swim a little bit or whatever. It was not deep enough. It was about I would say two feet of water or so. So this is how we enjoyed the summers. By wintertime everything there was just inside the house and we were skiing, I mean not skiing but we were sledding or something like that outside a lot always. One thing we didn't miss is snow. It was always plenty of it. And that's it.

INT: Okay. I'd like you to describe your sisters a little bit. You haven't talked too much about them.

SOL: My sister, one sister was the next one to me. It was the younger sister of me where my brother was older, and then I was the next and then my sister.

INT: What was her name?

SOL: My sister's name, the older one was Sara. And she was very, she was going to school and was very quiet, and shy and very pretty though. A very pretty face and a nice figure and she was, didn't have the right clothes to make her prettier. She didn't have the right atmosphere, she didn't have the right friends. It was a tough life for her especially too. And then the younger sister after my mother passed away, I was about that time I think ten or so, she went to my uncle's house in another town about maybe thirty miles away, thirty kilometers away and she stood with them for a couple of years. And she was going to school there and they took care of her. And she liked it there a little better because it was more Jewish people there and everything. Then at the end before the war I remember when I was home, and she came back and she was with us. By then my father remarried; and I went away, and my brother went away and the only two sisters left were left at home. And they didn't have a nice way of living, because they were not treated like my mother used to treat them. And they were always depressed and not too happy. But nobody was happy that time in those conditions all together. So those are the memories of my. Then during the war my older sister used to be with us in the town where my father moved in and he used to have a little better life over there with all the Jews. But the Germans are already occupying us. And this was shortly before we were all dispersed. And we were more or less together and we were a little happier that time. But it ended very, very rapidly that time and that's it.

INT: So when your father moved to this other town this was after the occupation?

SOL: No, it was before the war, before. It was about five years before the war, and I was with them during the war from Krakow. I was for a while in the ghetto, and then the war broke out in '39. The end of '39, they started to get that ghetto going and I escaped from that ghetto and went to my father. At least I was in freedom over there, and it was 'til about '41, the end of '41, '42 when they started to evacuate all the Jews to the camps and everywhere else. So I was there from about '41, something to '42. In '42 this is where they ended all the Jewish settlements in those towns and everywhere.

INT: What gave you the idea to escape from the ghetto to go back to your father? Was it easy to do that?

SOL: It was, in the beginning yes. If I would have waited another six, eight months I couldn't have gotten out, probably. There was always a way to get out. If it wouldn't have been for the Polish atmosphere a lot of Jewish people would have gone out and lived outside the ghetto. It wasn't such a closed thing. There is always an escape, but wherever I tried to escape the outside, the Polish people are not too much better than the Germans. So that's why everybody was concentrated in that ghetto because there was no way out either. If we would have escaped we would have been brought in by the Polish people just as bad as by the Germans.

INT: So how did you manage to get out and get to family safely?

SOL: It was that time in the beginning was not as closed and I went out, I took a bicycle, and I went to my father to the other town. And this is how I was at least another year, a year and a half I was there with my father. And in that little town we had problems with the Germans and they were catching us to work or here or there, but there was not a, a permanent or a designated ghetto. We lived all in that little town dispersed until the time came where they took everybody out and sent away.

INT: Okay, before we go into that I did have just a couple more questions about your family. Who was the decision maker in your family?

SOL: It was always the father more or less, but there was not too many decisions to make when a child needed something, a pair of shoes, or a suit, or whatever both the mother and father decided more or less what to buy, and for how much and whatever. To buy a suit it was like you are buying a house over here. It wasn't a common occurrence. You might buy a suit once in four or five years, and then you wore it and then a pair of shoes, you wore it until, until it fell apart. And this, those are the decisions mostly the parents made as far as I know together. Everything else was routinely a common straight life which--

[Tape 3 - End Side 1] [Tape 3 - Begin Side 2]

SOL: When the holidays approached, so more or less they prepared for that holiday and I remember for Passover normally they prepared everything for a whole week. They had to, they had to get matzos, and they had to get eggs and all the other chicken or whatever for a whole week. And they accumulated, started to do it way in advance. Also they prepared like ducks or geese, they used to prepare them for that holiday and also wine, my father used to make himself from grapes and do it himself for Passover. So we had like sweet Manischewitz wine made by, by my father and it was great. It was very good and sweet. That's all I remember, it was sweet. Everything's sweet, tasted good for us.

INT: Amazing, all that they prepared and did just, you know, from the beginning.

SOL: Right, exactly, right.

INT: Yeah. How did your family show, express their affection for each other?

SOL: To us, to the children, the children did not see anything specific and I didn't notice anything specific.

INT: How about toward the children though, your parents (?)

SOL: Toward the children was all in a well mannered way so we were not hurt. We were not treated all differently from the other children. The only time if somebody brought a good report from school was something to which that specific child was a little more proud, and was a little bit more admired by the other children and by their parents for a while and then it cooled off. And in general the affection towards husband and wife is seen much more over here in the

United States than it used to be in Europe and in general. The men usually was in charge of everything, and he had the word. And sometimes the wife as I could remember now I could see it, had to more or less do what it was pointed out by the husband and not even asking any questions. This was the way, and this was the way it should have been done and this is the way it was done. And the affection specifically sometimes at a birthday or something it was not too much different, but to me now I can see there was no specific affection between a husband and wife in Europe. It was just like a routine, and it was nothing else, very seldom unless the wealthier people you could see a little more affection and a little bit more togetherness and a little bit more of a way of life which was entirely different than in the poorest [unclear] of the families. Because we had some friends who were very well off, and they had everything they wished for, and they had like special horse and a very carriage which was beautiful and they always, you could see them going together to town with that thing and it was a driver in the front of it. So it was a different life, I would say, was more maybe respect, more, more affection because of the conditions. The conditions didn't allow any affection in my opinion. It was as simple as that, really.

INT: So when you brought home a good report card or did something special how did you, how did your parents show that they were proud of you?

SOL: Well they, they showed off to other families, that was the first thing they did. And I was, I remember I was at the end of the school more or less, the last year of the last report I won a, (pause) I was a good runner and I was the first so they gave me a book. So the teacher called us in and they gave us a book. They gave me a book and they gave the other people also certain little things. So I got more or less the best present, it was a book. So I was reading that book and in that book was always at home and it was to be shown that I won something. It was my reward. Otherwise, there was no specific things which we were getting from school or other awards. There was nothing specific to be remembered really. I really don't remember anything else.

INT: You had mentioned that when you were hit over the hands by your teacher in school that there were times your father would do, say you're going to get [unclear]. Were there other, if there was another instance at home, let's say if you misbehaved or the other kids, how did your father discipline, or your mother?

SOL: One time I remember my father went to school complaining on the children. And I remember it was for me or my brother. They were buying things for us, let's say in the town where was a little bit different than all the Gentiles were wearing. It was really, it showed out. It was not, it was out of line. So I didn't remember either it was me or my brother who complained. We didn't want to wear that coat. But that coat was really out of a different material. My father and mother bought it in town. They thought that this is the right way. It's warm or whatever, but it didn't look the way the other students looked and we were just refused to wear that coat. And this is where my mother or my father went to the teacher, and told them to tell us that we should wear it. And we were called into the teacher, and the teacher told us that there's no way you should refuse a coat not to wear because it looks different. As long as it is comfortable for you and everything, you shouldn't give your parents a hard time not to wear it. So this was the

condition and then we had to accept it because the teacher was above the family. The teacher was really had more authority than the family, and we respected. We had to respect the teacher much more than the family in general.

INT: What place did the Jewish religion play in your life as a child?

SOL: It was important that we practiced it every week, every year, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, high holidays was very sacred to us, and very respected, and obligated and done in a way where had to be done. And we, that's the only thing we knew is that religion, and this is what you have to do, and pray every morning and every evening, read our prayer books in the morning and in the evening. And we were laying out tefillin all the time when I was thirteen. There was not such a thing as to miss a prayer. We didn't go to a synagogue every day, but we had to say the prayer three times a day, and we did it in the morning before we went to school, and we did it in the afternoon Mincha before it got dark and then you said the final prayer, Ma'ariv in the evening. And it was day in and day out the same routine, and only on Saturday, Friday night and Saturday we had the minyan, and we went to that home-made synagogue and we did our prayers together.

INT: Was there any discussion about G-d? Do you know what your parents thought about G-d or did they ever discuss it with you?

SOL: No, we had a respect for G-d. You knew that everything is G-d. Whatever we pray is G-d and in general what we prayed in Hebrew, most of us did not understand that Hebrew meaning. There was no translation in Polish because our main, main language was Polish, and we knew how to write and read in Polish. We also knew how to write Yiddish and how to speak Yiddish, but we did not understand the Hebrew meaning of [unclear]. We knew the prayer book; we knew how to read the prayer book in Hebrew but we did not understand the meaning in Hebrew. As a matter of fact I still don't understand it. Over here at least I can read it in English and over there there was not a Hebrew book written with a translation and the language we were used to speaking [unclear]. So the only thing we had, we had, we knew how to say the brachas, we knew how to pray in Hebrew but we did not understand it. We knew it comes from G-d and we were asked to do it for G-d and that's about it. Now I don't think our parents understood that meaning. Maybe they understood a little more from their long life and experience, because you start the prayers as you are four, five years old and pray all your life three times a day. They catch up certain meanings. We had the certain meanings at the synagogue, prayers which we had to respect and sit up and everything like that and Unetanneh Tokef and this was the prayers for the future year or whatever. So you knew certain things what's happening, and they were serious. So we, we had to we also practiced because of a Cohen. My family was, my father was a Cohen so we had those prayers every week in the synagogue with those tallisim over your heads and everything. And those things I remember and they were taken to us very, very seriously and we practiced it fully.

INT: Was there special respect for your family because they were Cohanim?

SOL: Not a certain, we were a little bit pointed out because we were the only ones. Whenever you needed that first aliyah or something, my father always was there. Later on my brother or whatever. We were a little bit more respected I think in synagogue for a Cohen and, because we had to do if there was no, none available it was different, but since we were available so my father was always treated for the first aliyah and everything else as a Cohen.

INT: Okay, I'd like you to think of five adjectives that would describe your family, that you can think of.

SOL: My father was good in nature, and respected all the people surrounding him and he was sometimes too good for his conditions. He gave away too much, hurting the family ourselves, which I sometimes the remarks from my mother could have been, "Why did you do that and in knowing that we needed ourselves more?" So those are the points I can point out. I don't know what else. My father was very organized, and clean, and good looking, and always dressed well and was respected very much by other people too because of that. My mother too, I mean she had to go, she was not as generous maybe to other people as my father was. My father was very, they had a name for it specially because he was so good. He was too good for others for everybody. So, I don't know. I think that's about all.

INT: That's wonderful. Wonderful. One last question that I do want to ask you about your family, do you remember any kinds of expectations that your mother and father had for you for when you grew up, dreams that they might have had or...?

SOL: I think I mentioned that once before, the expectations from parents over there in general were more than the children could accomplish. They did not give the children a chance to do something and to do it in a way either with the knowledge or education and to be independent. The rule as a whole in the whole existence over there was the expectations from the parents that after your school, fourteen years of age, you should be able to bring home certain equities which a lot of children did at that time. Naturally, in that town where the father was in a business the child could pick up something in that business and be helpful, or run that business the way the father does or maybe even better. But in a field where the father had nothing, and he had to go out and deal with the Gentile customers whatever and to expect from a child to be successful at home, it didn't materialize as easy. Sometimes the children had no choice after fourteen, fifteen years; they didn't have anything to do unless they were, the parents were farming and they could do some farming. We were not, we were capable, the children and willing, more than anything else if somebody would come in and say, "Listen, go out and cut a lawn," or there was no cutting lawns but, "straighten out the lawn, and do it all day, and I give you a dollar," you would work as hard as you could and just get the dollar all day long, not to ask any questions. They were willing and capable but there was nothing to do for them in order to bring some help to home. The children were willing and they were, those were the expectations. Naturally when I went to Krakow I was capable and I was successful because there was something to do. There was something to do and so were the other children. There were a lot of children very capable in anything, and they were willing and capable to learn. If there was anything to do, anything available to do and to get paid. That's why people who came to America they were working ten...ten hours, twelve hours and sixteen hours a day because there was something to do and they

got paid for it. That's why a lot of people are successful over here, but coming from a country like we did we tried to work, we tried do something, but there was nothing to do and there was nothing to be paid for.

INT: How old were you when the persecutions started?

SOL: I was about eighteen in 1930, what was it? 1940, '41 because '39 when war broke out we were not persecuted yet, but in '41 I was almost twenty years old, nineteen years old.

INT: And how did your family respond to the persecution and what was going on after the invasion?

SOL: Nobody knew anything. Nobody, there was no communication, there was no (interruption) As the persecutions started and I don't really remember. I don't really know when Auschwitz and all the other destruction camps started. We did not know anything that something like this is going on. The only knowledge we had that they are gathering the Jews for working for work camps and they are sending all out to camps. We did not hear from any camps in existence, we did not hear, we were just with that knowledge of that the Jews have to leave their homes, and go to camps and work. There were isolated cases where they came at night and they picked up some individuals, not in mass like at the end. Individuals are sent out to camps and they were never heard from them again. And these were mostly the cases where the Gentiles had some grudge against the Jews. I remember even in our village at that time, because there was one wealthy family so they had a lot of ground, and they had a dispute with the neighbor and they had the surveyors over there which was so unusual in those parts of the countries. And all of a sudden that neighbor, that wealthy Jew disappeared right in 1939, at the end of '39. They took him out and this was later on, it was known that this neighbor of his had just announced him to the Germans and the Germans took him out. Otherwise there were only in 1941 where they started to gather the whole town in one place and send them out. And this is how I was sent out too. Separately, my family went out separately, and I was separately gone to a labor camp. And my family went to Treblinka and all those destruction camps which I heard from 'em maybe a week after. They wrote me a letter to the other camp and then it was gone.

INT: Do you know why you were separated from your family?

SOL: I don't know. I shouldn't have done it maybe. I was always (pause) it really bothered me a lot that I went separately. I shouldn't have gone without my father. A lot of times the fathers also survived. The problem was with me that I was working in a factory in that town with other young men and we did something, we produced for the German Army. And I was there employed with that, for the last maybe six months before that gathering. And then they liquidated that factory and the Jewish owner who owned that factory was, knew me and knew how to, how I did over there was very capable and I was doing great. So all of a sudden they called out that particular segment of people that we are, that they were looking for people who are manufacturers or whatever who can work as mechanics and anywhere else in the factory. So I joined that group not even knowing that my father is not included and, and they took us on trucks, and they sent us to one point. And I was a matter of fact not too far from my father

because I was also in East Poland and my father was in that destruction camp of Treblinka. He was sent over there and I was sent there. And there they took the women separately and they took the men who were older also to certain camps but mainly they sent everybody to those camps, either Auschwitz or Treblinka or Majdanek or the other death camps which were meant directly to death. And I was meant to work. And they took us to a factory in Poland where I used to work for two years.

INT: Do you know the name of the camp?

SOL: Yeah, it was in Polish, they called it Rzeszow, and there was a Reichshof which they built. There was the only factory, airplane factory in Poland and they took us over there. And there were already about 500 Jews when I came there and we came with a group maybe about 300 from, was also close to 500 I think, yeah. And we came the day of erev Yom Kippur. Always those things happened. As a matter of fact I never forget that moment before when we came we were a little bit better healthier condition than the other who were there already. They came from Eastern Poland and we came more from the west. And we had a Yom Kippur service on the outside. And those guards were there and we were singing that Kol Nidre and everybody was crying. It was terrible. And that moment really sticks with me.

Later on we were assigned to work twelve hours a day with a soup at lunch time, and maybe a sixteenth of a bread a day and one watery soup in the evening. And you were working there for two years, almost. And I for one was lucky because nobody in the camp could fix bikes for the SS people, and finally they called out somebody who we had to fix a bike, otherwise the SS will shoot some of our members. So I volunteered to go out and try to fix those bikes. And a matter of fact it was such a good move for my side. They gave me tools, they gave me everything and I was great at it because I was working in a store like that for about two years in Krakow and I knew the whole trade from A to Z. And I was about the only one who could do it, so my only disadvantage was that I was working for twelve hours, and then I had to come home and do some work on the bikes. I was not relieved from my job after twelve hours so sometime I worked. But finally I got together and the man who was working in the kitchen knew how good I am at the bikes so he told me to fix his bikes too. So I got enough food later on from that kitchen that I could feed some of my friends.

As a matter of fact we were about eighteen men who survived and we were all together. And I really saved quite a few because one had troubles with his lungs and everything. If he wouldn't have gotten some butter or bread what I brought, he wouldn't probably survived. And they all survived with me, the final group. As a matter of fact we were maybe only about thirty from those 500 survived at the end. And I had pretty good. First year I had terrible. I couldn't even move. I was hungry always and working for twelve hours. And they liked me on the job because I could run. I and another Jewish boy he was a college engineer from Italy and he was the only one and I in the factory who could run that machine. It was we were making the clutches for airplanes, and it was a very close tolerance work that not even the Polish mechanics could do it. So we were the only ones and we were treated pretty well. The only problem was that if one of us got sick somebody had to be at the machine because there was no, no way to let that machine

idle. One time I remember that the foreman of the Jewish foreman came in and he said, "Sol, you have to stay--"

[Tape 3 - End Side 2] [Begin Tape 4 - Side 1]

SOL: That they would really find out that he is not capable to work, they would give him a day or maybe at the next time they would shoot him. They would take him out and get rid of him. So I stood at the machine for another twenty-four hours and then I had to stay my twenty, my, I mean my twelve hours, his twelve hours and my twelve hours. I was on my feet for thirty-six hours and then I came to the camp and I had to fix bikes. It was not easy. I was young and healthy. I, for some reason I managed to handle, this happened quite a few times. And every time it happened it was really a drain and you had to stay awake at that machine. You couldn't just close your eyes for a moment. And somehow I managed, and it went through and you survived that time.

But as the Russians pushed towards Poland in 19, early 1944 they took us out of that camp, and they moved the whole factory and they tried to locate us again. Finally we landed and near Paris, France. They had that tunnel for which they had some machines like that situated. It took them about maybe four or five months to situate those machines and then they brought us over there. In the meantime, we went through all those concentration camps on transition. We were in Plaszow, in Krakow where the Schindler's List was filmed; I was there for a few weeks. And then they took us to Germany to Flossenburg Oranienburg Dachau. I was, we were all in those camps just in transition. They probably had the mind to destroy us at one point, but for some reason nobody knew anything and we were going.

Finally we landed over there in that tunnel near Paris. It was tough, very tough. I couldn't handle the work. We were doing work in that tunnel on the V-2's for England and each shell was about, each rocket was about 120 pounds heavy and I had to attend a (pause) machine where it was pushing out about maybe three, four hundred shells like that a day. Finally I couldn't stand it anymore so I dropped one shell on my foot just to go and get out and go to, they had some kind of a field hospital there. A matter of fact I got healed with that food too soon and afraid to go back to that job, so I reinfected my foot. I put some dust on my wound and it started to re infect. A matter of fact it came to a point it was too much, they almost took off my leg. And somehow I survived. This was in the late '44 where they got us. We got liberated probably. It was a little bit dysfunction. They took us again to another camp from France to near Hannover. This is, a matter of fact near Hannover, this is where I was, I was working on those shells, I'm sorry. And in France we were working those machines for about three months and then when the, that D Day came to halt in France they took us to Hamburg. So we only worked on those machines, I was working actually for about three months and then they took us to those in Hannover, to those shells for, for the V-2's. And this is where I was liberated at near Hannover.

INT: When you were, you said you were in these other camps as a transition, did they have you working in these camps?

SOL: Partially.

INT: Were you kept in a special unit and separate from the others?

SOL: We were with the others and mixed in, but for some way we were not long. We were only for about maybe two, three weeks and then transported again. We were a matter of fact in most of all the German camps and all the other camps and then they were kept shipping us from one camp to the other. A matter of fact I changed my name about three, four times during those camps because of friends of mine who wanted to go together, they were brothers. I had a cousin, a matter of fact he married my cousin, the one, and he wanted to go with his brother. And he was assigned to one camp and I was assigned to here, so I took, I changed my name and I said you go with your brother and I stay here. I got beaten up once because they called the other name, and I forgot my name. And this is how we changed our names quite a few times. So I was one time I was Metzger, the next time I was Silverberg and the third time I had another. I changed my name about three, four times. I had different numbers. I had to remember my number and I had to remember my new number and everything. So I was survived, actually, I think with a different name altogether. So it was a lot of times, you know, a brother's cousins or something they wanted to go together. And they were sending one group one way, the other group somewhere else. So I went with the other group just to give them an opportunity to go as brothers or whatever. So there was not, I was not the only one who did that. There was a lot of people who changed their names in order to accommodate others and this is how it was going on. And I was mainly in those camps.

A matter of fact I put in after the liberation, I put in all those names into, into my, they were asking for reconciliations, they paying some rent or something to the people. And then I was not recognized as a, as valid for those to receive the rent because I was not one full year in the concentration camp. So I didn't get that rent which most of the Jewish survivors are getting. My wife, a matter of fact is getting because she was in one camp which was recognized as a, as a concentration camp. All those labor camps in general were not recognized as a concentration camps, which in some places they were worse than the concentration camps. In concentration camps you didn't work; you are only sentenced to a death and whenever your number came up they took you out. But there is some work was done in concentration camps too. I was in Oranienburg, this was near Dachau and I was working there. They took us out every morning with a train, and we were unloading certain transports from one train to another and something like that. So I was working there for a few weeks but they kept moving us from one to the other and I didn't know what is right to put in the papers. I put in the truth and at the end I was not recognized that I was in a concentration camp. So at this point now let them choke with their money over there anyway. I don't care. But still it's very unfair from the German government to ask questions where and how you were detained for three, four years. You are entitled, they should pay forever. Even the children they should pay, in my opinion, for the things what they did, the Germans in general. So they are powerful now, and we can't do anything about it.

INT: When you left the original camp were there certain assigned guards that stayed with you or every place, every camp you went to you picked up new guards?

SOL: Yes. Guards were all different. Every camp had their own guards. Mostly they were Ukrainians, Romanians. And in Poland for instance there were only Romanian and Hungarians

who guarded us. There was not too many German guards in general, only in the concentration camps there were some of mainly the Ukrainians and the Romanians, Hungarians; they were doing the dirty work for the Germans. Could be a camp of a 1,000 guards and there was maybe ten Germans. The rest was all, they are collaborators and the men who loved to kill Jews. They were mostly the Ukrainians. You found eighty percent of Ukrainians in all those camps. There was some Polish, very, not too many for some reason.

INT: Sol, can you spell the name of the camp? The name?

SOL: Yeah, sure.

INT: Thank you.

SOL: Rzeszo'w [Rzeszow]. This was in Polish. And German was Reichshow [Reichshof].

INT: And that's where you worked on the machines with the Italian guy?

SOL: Yeah. No, this was the camp in Poland where I worked with the, yeah, with the Italian student. This was an airplane [unclear] factory and they were doing - Mercedes Benz took over that and they were making engines for airplanes.

INT: And Mercedes took it over during the war?

SOL: Yeah, during the war. We were building Mercedes Benz engines over there in that factory. A matter of fact they were testing the engines about ten, about 100 feet, 50 feet from my barracks where I used to sleep and they were testing them during the day and night. Day in and day night and there was such a, I mean a scream of those engines that we couldn't, that all our barracks were shaking. And this is how we had to sleep, and this is how we had to work and we live through the whatever, two years when I was there. And somehow we survived.

INT: Did you have a chance to say goodbye to your family? Did you all know that you were going to be separated?

SOL: Not as close. We were on the, on the trucks already and we were waving to our parents and to our people. There were a few thousand people that time at that gathering from the whole town. In the whole areas they took them together. And this was about the end but I received some letters, about two letters to the other camp and that Rzeszow camp from my father. And then I received from his friend, which I knew they went together, that my father fell off a truck going to work in Treblinka and he got killed. And this was about, I would say maybe three, four weeks after I got to that camp. And this was the end of all the communications I had ever with other people.

INT: Was that unusual that people would be able to communicate and say what happened?

SOL: For some reason you got mail the first, maybe the first few weeks in that camp, in that camp over there. I got mail somewhere and then we wrote. And I wrote out too. I don't know if he received my letters, but I wrote out and gave it to the Gentile because we were working together with the Polish workers in that factory. And the Polish workers were very indifferent, very, I think indifferent is the right way. They didn't care for us or to help us any way. And we were working at one machine next to the other and there [unclear] sit down to eat. We didn't have anything to eat, and they were eating all this good food and never threw a piece of bread to us or whatever, never happened. A matter of fact when I came to the camp I have to tell you that, that one young, I was only twenty years old and another man was working nearby said, "Listen, that jacket is too good." As a matter of fact he was right. "They are going to take it away from you anyway." I had a beautiful new jacket, "so give it to me and I will see that you get the bread and this and that and I give you some food for it as we work." So he didn't bring any food. I gave him the jacket. The jacket would have been ruined anyway because every two weeks we were going to a steam to delice us so they were putting in all the clothes in a kettle of steam and you can imagine how that jacket would come out from that steam in no time. A matter of fact we got uniforms that time, the regular uniforms. In the beginning we were all worried for the first maybe six, eight months that they were bringing old clothes, probably from other Jewish people where they send them out to the, to the death camps and they were clothing us with those clothes. And whatever I could find which fit me so I was wearing. And then afterwards in the other camps we got the, all the blue/white uniforms, the prison uniforms. And this is how I got in touch with one Polish young man which I believed in and he never brought me a bread, he never brought me anything to eat. And that's why I say let the Polish people, they would be a little bit more, I don't say cooperative but more sensitive to the Jewish people and not to just to let them go, not to denounce them to the Germans, a lot of Jewish people would have been survived without being killed in the camps and everything else.

INT: It almost sounds like they had no fear themselves working there.

SOL: Who?

INT: The Polish.

SOL: They had no fear, they had freedom. They had 100% full freedom, no persecution, no, and a matter of fact in general the Polish people had better with the Germans than without the Germans before the war. Before the war they worked very hard on the farms; they couldn't afford anything. And here they had the black market where they could sell their products, farm products to people who needed those products. And they lived actually during the war in better conditions than they lived before the war. And some of them were, they did persecute the Polish people only in a town where a German soldier or some German soldiers were killed so they could wipe out a small village; and the Germans could come in and wipe out the village as a revenge as they did in Italy or somewhere. I knew I read some, some books where the Germans liquidated a few villages where the Germans were killed. Otherwise the Polish people had no interference. First they had benefits. As soon as the Jews had to go out of their business the Polish people, the collaborators took over their business, their houses, everything, they only gained, they didn't lose anything in general in my opinion. 'Cause our house and thousands of

our friends' houses were taken over by Polish people and not paid a penny for it. And they still probably live in them and enjoyed a better life with the Germans than before with the Polish government.

INT: When this Polish guy took your coat and then didn't give you the food, what were you thinking?

SOL: I wasn't thinking anything. I was just sitting, and see how they enjoyed their food, and we were hungry and not having anything. But as I said before, that after a while, I, I could get and I did get more or less enough food for myself to sustain and help friends because of my work with the bicycles. Otherwise I would have been in the same trouble, live on that sixteenth of a bread with two soups a day. That's all we got so for, for years.

INT: Did you meet up with any of these guys after the war?

SOL: Yes. Namely with the people we got liberated. It was all from the first camp. It was about maybe twenty-five, thirty men out of 500. And I still have, I still know where a few who are in Israel, and some in Canada and some here in the United States.

INT: I think we're going to stop today, okay?

SOL: It's enough. Yeah, I have to leave anyway. What time is it?

[End Tape 4 - Side 1] [Tape 4 - Side 2 - Blank] [Begin Tape 5 - Side 1]

INT: June 24, 1994. Sol, the last time we met, there are a couple of things that I wanted to ask you about. You were talking about your escape from the ghetto in Krakow and I wondered were your uncle and other relatives able to escape or did they remain in Krakow when you left to go live with your father?

SOL: No, they were, actually they moved out of Krakow and went to a small town about twenty miles away. The name was Wolbrom and I went there too afterwards because I was working yet in near the ghetto and I stood there for a little while, then I joined them over there because my father lived over there in that little town. So then we were in that town until they gathered all the people and sent them away. This is how I got to that camp from there.

INT: Are you aware of any other of your friends that escaped from the ghetto?

SOL: Not that I know of exactly right now, but I met a lot of people from Krakow in that little town where I was there. And we were friendly and we were spending a lot of time together in that town. And we kept more or less very close on daily basis because there was nothing to do and we all were looking for friends. And there were quite a few people from Krakow there in that town.

INT: Do you remember what your thoughts were at the time as to what might be happening with the German invasion and with the fate of the Jews?

SOL: We lived from day to day and really the communications and the knowledge of what is happening was very limited, and nobody knew what really is going to happen or what is happening. There were no papers, no secret communications, nothing. We didn't, we just were waiting. And a matter of fact we were still well fed over there because we had our, some money with us and everything. And we were more or less comfortable and lived a normal life until the Germans started to cramp down and move all the Jews out to the concentration camps and the death camps. But we never knew about any death camps or any. We knew somehow some rumors were that they sending certain young people away to work, but we had no, nobody coming from those camps or nobody gave us any information on them.

INT: Was there any discussion in your family about possibly moving somewhere else? To another country or to...?

SOL: There was no way to get out and we didn't have the proper collections and funds to get out of the country and it was almost impossible, I believe, to get out of the country unless some people had a lot of money and maybe they had some connections, they did come out of the country. The biggest movement was from our part that people were escaping east towards Russian border because this was just before the Russian armies invaded Poland. No, this was actually before the German armies started the war with Russia. So a lot of people escaped to Russia and lived there through the war in certain camps or in Siberia, because the Russian government did not trust those people who came in from the west side of Poland to the east side for they were occupying Lemberg. This was about like the border between the German occupation and the Russian occupation. And the Russians usually did not trust the Jewish people so far as a matter of fact that the Jewish youngsters, the Jewish youth was all leftist. They were really against the Polish government and the depression what the Polish people created towards the Jews, so they all turned left and the communism was a good ideal for the Jewish youth. And still Russia felt that all the people who came from there, either they are collaborators with the Germans or not trustful to the Russian people and they send them mostly to camps far, far away in Siberia. And a big percentage of people survived. My uncles, my first uncles and quite a few people which I know survived in Siberia and they came back to Poland to Germany actually.

INT: Now have these uncles lived near you before the war?

SOL: Yes, in Krakow mostly.

INT: So they had then gone over to the Russian (?)

SOL: Right. See, they went east and I went west to my father's town.

INT: Do you know any friends of yours that were involved in the communist movement or any Jewish youth socialist movements?

SOL: I belonged myself into a youth which were also leftist. My brother, mostly all the youth was pro-Israel. They had the Israeli like Hapo'alei Zion. I don't even remember the names what we would call those organizations and they were all. Some people went to Israel through different countries but this was just before the war broke out. Once the war broke out the borders were pretty well closed either from the German side or from the Russian side, but as they took over those borders and they were creating a border, there was always a way to get through, either west or east. This is how most of the people from Jewish youngsters escaped mostly to Russia, some to Romania.

INT: Did these youth groups, they still meet after the invasion? Like when you moved to the town with your father was there any congregation of the Hapo'alei H Zion or any of the other groups?

SOL: Yes, because in that same town there were organization but we, we actually were, lived very, very like underground because the Germans, it took a lot of people everyday. They were capturing people and sending them to work but it was not that they, those people didn't return. At that point they were taking the people for a daily work either shoveling snow in the winter or working in the summer on the railroads just fixing up or something. And they came with a truck and then they picked up whatever they needed, twenty or thirty youth and they brought them back in the evening. So this was just in 19-, I would say '41, '40 and '41. Then '42 there was a lot of times that they took come youth or some people and never returned them. They just brought them, they took them somewhere out and we didn't even know what happened to them.

INT: What do you think helped you to survive during the period when you, you know, after the Nazis took you to camps?

SOL: The first two years, as I said, in those small towns we survived pretty well without any inconveniences more or less. But later, once we got to the camps in Poland, myself I think that I mentioned once that I had opportunities to work in that camp, and fixing bicycles and whatever. I survived and survived more or less well, not that I had all the conveniences but I had a little bit maybe more food than the average prisoners had. Even with the food that they gave us in Poland itself, some Jewish people had some connections with the Poles and they got some extra food here and there in that camp where we were surrounded by SS but still we had connections. We worked with the Poles in the same factory, so some people had connections. But I did not have any connections with the Poles but in the camp myself I had some opportunities to make some extra food because I was fixing the bicycle for the kitchen man who was in the kitchen and also for the SS men who ran the camp. And he, once in a while himself, threw me a bread or this or that. So this is how I helped my group. I was with a group from the same town where we came together, we were about eighteen boys and some elder men too and we kept together in a, like one family. If one received something extra we shared or another.

INT: Well, how about your beliefs in G-d, your faith? Were there any changes that happened during the war?

SOL: Not exactly, we didn't practice any, any religion in that camp but in the beginning since we were there, nothing actually changed. As far as the youth, they were not as religious. Some families kept kosher and were very strict and some not. In my family we were religious, we were going every week to the synagogue or whatever, but not to a point where we were very restricted. And in the camp itself our mind was just away from everything. Our fight was just to receive an extra piece of bread or the work. Between the work twelve hours a day and all the other problems we had, fighting cold and heat in the summer, we were so preoccupied that most of the people were just depressed and the looks of the people were much different than the normal people. All the eyes were bulged out and looking for, for an extra piece of bread or whatever. And we had to work twelve hours a day and most of the people worked much, even more, longer than twelve hours. Working twelve hours, coming back had a chance to go and sleep a little bit. The hygiene was very bad. There was nothing, you know, they took us every three, four weeks to a community bath where they steamed our clothes and they kept it a little more hygienic and we could take a shower there. But it wasn't every week. It was probably every three, four weeks and you had to walk to the city. It was about, I would say about fifteen miles away.

INT: Do you remember the name of the city?

SOL: Yeah, it was Rzeszow.

INT: Okay.

SOL: This was on the outskirts. The factory was on the outskirts of that town.

INT: Did you ever think of G-d or (?)

SOL: Not specifically. I was, most of us sooner or later, later on once we were a longer time in the concentration camp we, a lot of people say where is G-d? What happened to our G-d who we believed so, so faithfully and prayed all the time, and did nothing wrong in our life and now all of a sudden we see all those things happening, shooting people, and just murdering people and no help from the outside. And naturally the belief in G-d diminished as we came later on to Germany and saw all the murderers, concentration camps and all the treatment of all those people and all the dead people are surrounding us, we just didn't think about G-d anymore. And a matter of fact after the liberation whoever survived, I know a lot of Jewish youngsters and even elderly said, "It's enough to be Jewish. I am not going to be Jewish anymore," and some of them took over different beliefs like Christianity. And even though they had that feeling of Jewishness in themselves they parted and they got out of the Jewish life. They said it's enough of Jewish life. But this was a small percentage, I would say maybe five, ten percent of the survivors and most of it still remained Jewish and kept as Jewish. And a matter of fact the same thing with me; I am not too religious, I don't probably believe in G-d like I used to, but I am still with the tradition and the all things which are Jewish. And I am very much pro-Israel and pro-Jewish. And when I see on television what's happening to the Jewish people in general, it hurts. And if something happens in Israel which is a deterrent it hurts me too. And I remain Jewish and so did other survivors about the same way. More, some of them are very religious, and they kept that

status, and they are either in Israel, or here in the United States or in other countries. They are very faithful and they are very religious. And I think there are two groups: either very religious or very liberal.

INT: When you say your beliefs about G-d changed, what did you think about G-d before the war when you were growing up? What was your image of G-d?

SOL: It was a, a belief in G-d and the way our parents brought us up that you got to pray every morning, every evening. We prayed and we went through all the religious rituals in Jewish and Poland. It was very primitive life, but it was very religious life. And there was no other life. Most of the Jewish families practiced the same way and my belief particularly as a G-d, we imagine that the G-d is somewhere in the skies, very, very authoritative and we felt very fearful to the G-d because we were taught by our parents if you don't do what is right you will be punished by G-d. And G-d was an authority and a belief which we always feared and respected.

INT: And how has that changed now? What do you think of G-d?

SOL: I personally don't believe in G-d at all. To me honesty and charitable, charity, honesty and thinking of helping people and human distress, this is my belief but just to think that there is a G-d and G-d is taking care of us I really don't believe. I know once we die just forget it. Nobody will come back, nobody came back and naturally I still believe that in our synagogue when I go every year I appointed Yom Kippur as my memory of all my families' death and I say Kaddish and I light candles at home. And this is the respect to my people who perished, and so does my wife and so do a lot of our friends too. And some of our survivors in Philadelphia I know, they belong to the survivors, the Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Philadelphia, they go more to synagogue and every Saturday or so and they live a little more of a Jewish life than I live over here in the suburbs.

INT: You mentioned that some of the people in the camp became depressed. Did you ever have a period where you felt despair or depression during that time?

SOL: Depression was not a word for it. We were always in distress and always fearing for our daily life. If you didn't do what you are supposed to do you could have gotten killed very easily. If you tried to escape from the camp or something you could get killed. And also the, the environment and the conditions were so poor and so depressed that all the people just didn't even think about anything else about, and now I would call it a depression. But that time it was just a common condition which all the people went through. And nobody was happy, or doing something happy, or have some parties or have something. This was not even permitted or practiced. And in the camp itself you never knew where you are going to be next day. But in Poland in that camp particularly we had a place where we went everyday to work and we had, and we had the everydays the same, getting those three times the food they gave us and it wasn't changing. But in the other camps as we were later, this was much different. It was just a humiliation and persecution like they could put us out 4:30 in the morning, out of the beds, naked in the cold, and they put on some numbers on our forehead, and we never knew what's going to happen. Some went back to the barracks and some just were transported somewhere

else or, or they could take out every tenth person and shoot them in our presence or something, you know. Those persecutions were a common way of life and somehow you kept escaping from it from day to day and not knowing what's going to happen the next minute or the next day. But fortunately my group from that Rzeszow group kept together because they felt, the Germans, that they might need us as somewhere else in another factory. And we were in transition from that time where the Russians were pushing towards Rzeszow over there and they took us to Germany and we were transported every week to different camps. And finally we landed in near France in a Colmar [unclear] was on the border between the Germans and the French. And they built a tunnel from Colmar to Paris and we were working in that tunnel. They set up machines and they, we did some parts. A matter of fact we did, I think we built those, the shells for the W-2's [V-2's]. (interruption) In German they called it Reichshof.

INT: I see, so this is the Polish pronunciation.

SOL: Right.

INT: Okay, good. In my ear it sounds like a J. I'd like to go now to the time that you were liberated. If you would describe how you were liberated and where you were liberated?

SOL: I was liberated with my group near Hannover and Ludwigslust, they called this was a camp where they took us and we produced those V-W shells and was very hard work, very poor food and I, and they had a little hospital there. Not a hospital but a separation of camps for people who couldn't work. So I damaged my foot that time and I couldn't stand it anymore so I went there to camp and this was the camp where we liberated. So it loosened up, the controls were loosening. This was about in February, March, and then we were liberated in May the eighth.

INT: Was that 1945?

SOL: 1945, right. And this camp was Braunschweig. There were very big industries, heavy industries for they were producing all the, all the heavy equipment for the war, tanks, and cannons and everything in that town. And we were branched off in one of the, one of the barracks were, they were bombed daily. We were, we had to run for cover every, almost every day when the invasion started. And a matter of fact the invasion was long on the way which we didn't know at all. And one morning we getting up but maybe a day, a few weeks before we noticed some packages coming from Sweden and they were distributing to the prisoners. And this was for the first time in all those years we were in camp. And naturally I feel that probably ninety percent of those supplies disappeared for the Germans first and then they gave us something. And one week before the liberation we received a special dinners with some meat from the German production. And finally one morning we got up and we see that the, all the caretakers, all the guards and everything, they are just changing their uniforms into civilian clothes and they are getting rid of their weapons. And we knew and we heard a lot of cannons around, and there were some fighting around and we were near a forest. And in the morning as they think all of a sudden we see that the gates are open. So all our boys who could walk, because most of us couldn't even walk, so we said, "Let's go," and we parted. We departed from

that camp, went into the forest and we saw a lot of Germans yet over there and some Americans. They were still shooting and we went to tell. We didn't know where we were going but we went out and then we were more or less free. And we came to that town of Ludwigslust and we came to a, a parking lot where there were some trucks, and we tried to start a truck but not too many of us knew how to operate a car. I was a little bit more knowledgeable, but I couldn't get it working and I couldn't get it where we thought that we get a car working we go out. Maybe it was--

[Tape 5 - End Side 1] [Tape 5 - Begin Side 2]

SOL: Actually there was a raisin warehouse with raisins, thousands of pounds of raisins in that warehouse next to this parking lot. So there was about maybe six, seven steps going up to that warehouse. Nobody from us could make it. We couldn't make it. We just couldn't step up and get in. So finally it was a jeep came in with some American soldiers and they asked us what we wanted to do. So there was a Jewish captain with them and we communicated and we said we want to come in. We want to get in over there. So he took about three of us at one time, he was a big man, and he picked us up, and lift us up and went in. As we came in we noticed those raisins and we were, we never saw it for years so we started to eat raisins. We lived on those raisins for about two, three days until everything quiet down and there were trucks and there were with loudspeakers that whoever (interruption) Anyway, so the loudspeakers were on those American trucks. Actually, there were English and the Americans in that town. It was not far from Bergen-Belsen, and Bergen-Belsen were the English and here the Americans. So the American apparently took that town and they, they were there. So they picked us up, we were finally, we crawled out of there and they picked us up and they got us to an American camp and then we started to live a little bit more humane. They had a hospital, they had everything and they took care of us. They created a lot of camps for those refugees, whoever. And we got soup for lunch and everything. It's a good thing that they fed us with soup because if they would give us some other foods a lot of people couldn't take it.

So this was the beginning of our liberation. And we were there for about two, three weeks and then they transported us to a established, more or less, camp about maybe ten, fifteen miles away from that town and this was, the name was Bolterdingen. And they had some Poles over there and we came in in that camp and from our group, from all the 500 people we had from that town when we came first from the Reichshof factory was about I would say about eighteen survivors and we kept together. So we were in that camp for a couple of months I think, and then they transported us to a regular established camp near Hannover also, near Frankfort, closer to Frankfort. They brought us somehow I remember by, by trucks, right. And they had an established DP Camp, they call it, with the, with the Joint Distribution who took care of all the necessities for the Jewish survivors. So this was a camp where they actually evacuated a whole little town, the Germans threw out, they took them out and they created a camp. And this is where we were for a month, maybe a year and some people were (pause) going to Israel, some went to Canada and some to South America.

And we applied to go to New York, because my wife had some people who, my wife's father took care, they came from Germany, from Austria to Poland just before the war. And they went from Poland before the war to America. And those were the people where Germany evacuated

all the Jews. It was just before the war, maybe six months before the war and then this was a time where you could escape somewhere to, if you had enough money or something, you could have escaped to the United States or either a different countries. And that man who was in their house for a while was looking for people who survived from that family. And my wife found out from (pause) her family that they are alive in the United States. A matter of fact, he was very wealthy and well-to-do. He owned about, I would say in New York and Manhattan about ten of the big hotels. His name was Gross and he brought us into the United, because you had, we had to have a sponsor who sponsored us. And I was married already and we came, we both came to that. And naturally in the United States once we came to New York, we were not a burden to those Grosses. We went on our own, and they invited us once in a while to their house for dinner and they had a summer home in West Chester and we went a couple of times over there. But we started and form a life on our own. We lived in a rooming house and, and a matter of fact I went back to Germany from New York because before I left Germany I had business there. I got acquainted with the, from that camp I got acquainted with a American captain who was dealing in Germany, he needed a German name and I had that German privilege. And I was running a import/export store. Actually, not store, office, and I was getting American nylons at that time and we were selling them to, to the department stores. And this was already in the '46, '47 and '48 actually.

INT: What did it feel like going back to Germany?

SOL: I went to Germany only briefly to liquidate everything because I didn't know. He said I should to go the United States, get my papers straightened out and then I can come back. So I came back. He paid for all those expenses, and the ships, and whatever I took. And I did what he wanted me to do because he still - and then he liquidated that store because he started to do some different things. And in 1950 we left for good. This was about 1948, the first time when we went to the United States, and about 1949 we came back for about six, eight months and then we came back for good.

INT: But how about your feelings with the Nazis and Germans [unclear] did it bother you at all?

SOL: It was tough. I had it more or less when I ran that import/export, a lot of my people stood there in Germany. They remained there and they were very, they were very successful and they made a lot of money. And I just didn't have the faith in the Germans and I didn't, I couldn't stand them, more or less. And I, I left. As a matter of fact when I came to the United States I sometimes I was really sorry because I had a good life, more or less, in Germany then. And I had to start very, very hard in the United States in doing things I would never probably did in Germany if I would remain in Germany. But after a while it took me a few years and I didn't even think of going back.

INT: Okay, could we stop one minute? I wanted to go, stop in the story, that I wanted to go back and ask you a couple of questions about things. When you were liberated with this group of guys, you went into the forest, what were your feelings at that time with this sudden freedom?

SOL: Oh, we were overwhelmed, actually. (pause) We were so uncertain that as we passed certain farm products we got some kohlrabis or something and we saw potatoes and everything which we didn't see for such a long time. So we packed ourselves up with those kohlrabis. I remember those kohlrabis I was carrying for about two weeks. I was still afraid that something would happen and we would be starving again. So, but as soon as we came to that camp of the Americans I still had those kohlrabis on my back, and then finally we got rid of everything and we were gradually getting normal food, and we getting normal clothes and everything else. This was just the beginning. In that forest as we walked we didn't, we thought it's probably the end of the war because we saw Americans, and these were the people who liberated us and we had confidence that this is probably the end of the war. And as we were in that American camp, then we knew what's going on that this is the end of the war, and the Germans were surrounded, and that we saw just transport after transport of German soldiers being evacuated from the town. And the Americans were becoming authoritative, and they had the officers and they had everything which they were a part of the occupation.

INT: When the eighteen of you had been together in the camps, did you ever have discussion about your situation and how you were going to survive?

SOL: Yes, we ventured out to a nearby town from that camp first, and this was not the DP camp yet, and we were looking - this was a temporary camp and we were looking for families and we hitchhiked some trucks or something, usually five, six of us and going to town. And as we came, we came to Bergen-Belsen. And Bergen-Belsen was a big concentration camp where all the people survived. As a matter of fact I found my cousin over there, my first cousin which is now in New York yet, and one of my men with the, of the eighteen, he married my cousin. And I met A.S. over there. This cousin was taking care of A.S. A.S. was very sick. What was it? She had the typhus, and she couldn't survive, and it took her a month. And she lived in Krakow about two blocks away from my house and I [unclear], so in talking we became close and then she started to recover. It took month and month and then we went from that camp, we went to another camp near Frankfurt and this is where they transported A.S. and all the other people from Bergen-Belsen too, to that camp. And this is how we got acquainted, and this is how we got together and this is where we married in that camp in Germany. This was in 1948.

INT: There are many things I want to ask. It's going to take me a minute. When you found your cousin, did you try and find other family members?

SOL: Yes, we tried and there were offices that time where they registered all the names of people who are looking for other members and then consequently, we were receiving or we could go to an office and find out certain lists they gave us of certain towns, what people are registered and also the same way we were looking for somebody else, so the other members who are looking for us too. So this is how people started to get some feeling of getting together with certain members of the family. So this was a big camp. There were thousands of survivors there near, near Frankfurt and then they liquidated that camp eventually in 1949, I think, and they let the people go on their own. Whoever wanted to evacuate they could go to Israel or to America or whatever, those in the offices who are starting in there and they were dispersing the people all over the world. And we lived for a while in Frankfurt. We rented a place and still had that little

office what I had and I was doing all right. That American captain, he had an American car over there so he was traveling a lot. He was traveling to Belgium, to England and he always was leaving that car near my apartment and I was driving it around over there in Frankfurt. And we became very friendly and he was treating me very well. A matter of fact I made a few thousand dollars that time with him and I came to the United States. If I wouldn't have listened to him I would have been a very rich man because he said, "Don't believe in the, in the German marks, just buy, hold onto dollars." If I had had the \$5,000 what I accumulated, if I would have it in marks, the marks that time was about three hundred dollars a, three hundred marks a dollar and for the \$5,000 I could have had 150,000 marks. And a mark became overnight became four dollars, four marks for a dollar so I would have probably had \$100,000 that time if I wouldn't have listened to him. But this is how it turned out. And I came to the United States with the \$5,000 and I saved it, and I kept it and this is how it started.

INT: Okay, so when you found your cousin did you find her on one of these lists at one of the centers?

SOL: No, she was in Bergen-Belsen.

INT: And you just passed her?

SOL: And no, we came and we were looking for names in that camp. They had an office and they had an office of all the names survived and we, I came to that room. It was like a hospital and she was laying in bed next to A.S. and this is how I found her.

INT: And were you able to find any other members of your family?

SOL: Not from the camp, but later on I found my first cousin, Kalman Sultanik, who is the vice president of the Jewish Congress, and he is still active in that but he moved to Israel from Munich. He survived in Munich and with two brothers, two of his brothers. One is still in Munich and he, and one died by an accident. And he is still, he lives in New York right now, this Kalman and he has a place in Israel. He travels a lot all over the world. He was first the one who was transporting a lot of the illegal aliyahs from Germany to Israel, that time when the Irgun was still active. And he was organizing ships, and then going through Egypt and bring those Jews to, to Israel. He was very active in the organization in Poland too. He was always active in the Jewish organization and this is how he became a member of the Jewish Congress and a member of the Israeli government, actually. And he's still, he and Bronfman right now are doing a lot of work. He travels always to Poland, back and forth, my cousin, tries to get out some money for the survivors' wealth which they left in Poland, but he is very unsuccessful. The only thing he made is some monuments they promised him to do. And he is in very close touch with the Polish government and he's always on the road.

INT: Now did he live near your village when you were growing up at home?

SOL: Yeah, we lived together. We lived about five miles apart.

INT: Now is he the same side of the family as the family in Krakow?

SOL: Yeah, he is my father's, no, he is my father's brother's son, and from the other family in Krakow it was from my mother's side. And they took me to Krakow and I lived in Krakow since it was about in 1937 I went to Krakow.

INT: So what ended up happening with the other members of your family? How did you find out about their fate or did you hook up with anyone?

SOL: No, you see in that town in Wolbrom where we were evacuated they were taken to different camps. Like my father went to Treblinka and he died there.

INT: Did you know that at the time though?

SOL: Yes, I found out. I got a letter in Reichshof.

INT: Right, you said.

SOL: I got a letter that he fell off a truck that time and then he died. And this was only my father. I don't, my father married for the second time. With the children they went probably to Auschwitz. They separated the women and children and they got this. But I first, I separated from my father because they called out, "Who is mechanically inclined and wants to work in a mechanical factory?" So this is how I got to that airplane factory in Rzeszow first with was a group of youngsters which I knew from a factory I was working in that town. We were doing some work for the German occupation forces, whatever.

INT: And how about your brother and sisters?

SOL: My brother died as we were running away from the Germans, east. We were trying to escape and on the road to in one town near the, not far from the Russian border was a bombarding and my brother got hit and he died there. And I came back to Krakow because the Germans caught up with us and didn't know where to go and how to do anything so we went back to Krakow to our house. This is where my family was still there.

INT: How were you able to cope with the loss of these family members? Where did you get an inner strength or a direction to be able to handle this?

SOL: It wasn't easy and somehow a human being, even in the worst distress I feel that every person is somehow selfish or, or trying to do his best to live. And after such test to what we went through, everybody was happy to be alive, even though that the life had not too much of a meaning without families, but we had so many friends who were in the same situation and we somehow lived together and close. Nobody actually, very seldom that somebody had a family, a father, or a mother, or brothers. They were all single survivors, or maybe two brothers from one family survived or something like that. Then this is how we got back on the track of living. It's not that because we lost our families we should have gone somewhere and pray, and do and do

something just to mourn our families. Most of the survivors didn't even know what happened to their families and they were hoping that somebody, somehow, somewhere survived. It took years for us just to look around and see and a lot of people did find some close friends or close family members which were in the Soviet Union and Siberia. This is how I found my uncles. My wife found her mother's brothers in Canada which they survived in Romania. And a matter of fact, one lived not too far from us in New York and we didn't even know that this was my wife's uncle's, first uncle's, daughter lived about three blocks away from us in New York in the early '49, '50's. And we didn't even know that they were around. By coincident my wife went back to Israel because her father survived in Romania and he went to Israel. He was a doctor in Poland, and he was a doctor in Romania. And then as the Russians came into Romania they almost caught up with him. They tried to eliminate all the intelligence from Poland and he escaped to Israel. And this is how my wife found out from some people that her father survived in Israel and she went to Israel. This was in 1963 and he was, and then I went down too and I saw him. About maybe a year later he passed away. He had some problems and cancer in his eyes and whatever. And he practiced for a while in Israel, medicine but he didn't join the Kupat Holim. He went on his own and he didn't, he was not successful in Israel because he didn't want to join the socialized medicine so he was on his own. But he made a living and he lived in a nice house in Rishon L'Zion and this is how we found him over there.

INT: So how did you find your uncles? These were uncles that were in Siberia?

SOL: Some, yeah. They came, as a matter of fact to one of the camps near us in Germany and this is how I found some. The other one, the Sultanik with his family, they were hiding in Poland and they were, they came to Munich. But every so often those camps, all the DP camps, had gatherings and we found out through lists of survivors and this is how we got together. And they lived in New York for a while, not far from us after the liberation and this is.

INT: How about the uncle that you lived with in Krakow; did he survive?

SOL: Yes, he did. In Russia, Soviet Union, and he moved to Israel. He went to that illegal aliyah [?] straight to Israel.

INT: Did you have a chance to mourn for the loss of your family?

SOL: Yeah, we always had in those camps, in the DP camps there were always minyans and whoever wanted to go and say Kaddish for their people, we had opportunities to do that. There were always people who believed more than I did in the religion and they gathered. And wherever we gathered I gathered. I was a Jew just the same if I came to that minyan or whatever. So we used to mourn. But I don't think there is anywhere in life where you mourn enough or don't mourn at all. I don't know. There are people who didn't even know what happened to their parents.

[Tape 5 - End Side 2] [Tape 6 - Begin Side 1]

INT: June 26, 1994. It's the second tape for the day. We're talking about Yom Kippur.

SOL: I decided to mourn Yom Kippur because I know that Yom Kippur is the day where I'm going to be in the synagogue. And since we don't know the exact date of their loss we saying Kaddish, and then we do everything we can and some charity donations for my family on Yom Kippur.

INT: With the group of eighteen friends that you went through the camps with, did you all ever discuss G-d, or religion, or what, what's happening in the world, you know with this situation with the Holocaust?

SOL: Yeah, most of us, we were youngsters and we were never so fanatic religious. We were just with the tradition with our parents. Our parents were not 100% kosher and everything, and we lived together. Naturally we were Jews, and then we were persecuted as Jews, and we know that we are Jewish and we don't try to escape from Jewishness. Some people, as I said, a matter of fact some out of the eighteen people said, "That's enough. Maybe we shouldn't be Jewish anymore." We were discussing those things and say that about that time the Jews were actually either from pity or somehow they didn't, they tried to, to have some pity on us, or even in Germany or Poland, or anywhere else but the anti-Semitism never disappeared. Even right after the war there were a lot of them left and they are still around. So that's why a lot of us thought maybe we should try something else. But I don't think that too many did. I know one in Lansdale who did. He is a Hungarian. He is not Jewish anymore but he still, he has family in Israel, and he still goes to Israel, but as a whole here he is not Jewish anymore. So I know a lot of people from Czechoslovakia, they even remained in Poland, not as Jews and they married into the Polish population. And there's a minorities of all which they did that, but I didn't do anything wrong during the war, and I didn't try to escape from anything and I am still the same as I was. Because a lot of Jews who were in some kind of offices or helping the German authorities to run the Jewish camps or something, and they might have and not they might have but they did a lot of wrong towards their fellow Jews. They probably have worries and they tried to escape from everything so they maybe changed to a different religions to get away from that. But I was a member of the Jewish persecution members and I have nothing to hide, and I didn't do anything wrong to get through the war and after the war.

INT: In this group of friends, the eighteen men, were there any that did not want to go on living that just wanted to give up, that were in total despair?

SOL: I wouldn't say, everybody wanted to live. For some reason our (pause) objectiveness towards living was maybe more enthusiastic than before the war because to go through such pains and hunger and all kinds of troubles for those years all of a sudden you become a human being again and you have everything you need. They were really some came back as human beings not even, with a bigger enthusiastic life than other people I feel.

INT: How about during the war itself when you were in the camp, did everyone, did anyone need help from the group as far as wanting to go on living at that time?

SOL: There was no way to get on with a normal living. You mean after the war?

INT: No, I meant to just keep alive, I meant to keep alive. Were there any in the group of your friends who wanted to just end their lives because the suffering was so horrible at the time that you were in the camps?

SOL: Oh, in the camps. There were not too many who did take their lives away on their own. There were such a (pause) a way, a will to live and suffering through those years. I don't know of too many who just took their lives and end their lives because of that. The more we were suffering the more we wanted to live. And psychologically I think it must be something the way this life is structured that mostly in young people they were so anxious to, to get over with and live that the strength. For instance in myself the strength of willing to live was just as great as anything else. It was the sufferings which we went through were just in our minds as a temporary way of getting through it, because we knew that sooner or later we may survive and we only believed that as we survive that the German people will suffer the same way as we suffered. We were very, very disappointed and we are still disappointed that the German population went out with no sufferings, and they recovered so fast and I can only blame the Americans for it. If it would have been left up to the Russians they would taught him a big lesson, the Germans. And we thought that they are going to be slaves all their lives, which they really deserved to be slaves forever the way they slaved us and killed us. And we believed that if we survive that those are going to be the people who are going to be servants to us as we were servants to them. But the Russians in the beginning tried to take vengeance of them, because they suffered much more than the Americans suffered from the Germans. And as the Americans took over the German cities and everything they gave them all the freedom they never deserved and this is how the German people survived with the Marshall Plan and everything created by the Americans. And this is what bothers me a lot and most of our survivors are really concerned that most of the Germans who were running the camps and murdering people had a way to escape to America and live through. And the Americans, as a matter of fact, gave them the way, the free passage to Argentina or South America for the biggest notorious murderers even though that the Americans knew that they did all the wrong. And because they could find out some things which were useful to the Americans against Soviet Union, so they let them go on their own. I will never forget that and I think it's too late even to talk about it because this is what the Americans did. I am thankful to the Americans, after all I am here, but on the other hand they let those murderers pass through the United States and even harboring them and they get them out of this country without any punishment.

INT: Did you or your friends ever contemplate actual revenge while you were still over in Germany?

SOL: As we were in Germany we tried to revenge, but we were punished right from the start. If we went to a farmer and told him to give us some food without paying because we didn't have any money those Germans were arrogant and just as bad as they were. In the beginning right after the war, maybe a month or two they were very feared and scared. But later on they knew and they saw what the American authorities are doing to them that they give them all the, all the opportunities to get back to their lives, they ignored our needs altogether. But as survivors from the camps, we on our own were strong people, and tried to survive and deal in certain ways even illegally like black market and something just to survive. And a matter of fact most of the people

survived and they are very successful, all of the people from all the survivors. I know people who are very wealthy, very very (pause) in good positions in the Jewish government and all over the world. We did pretty well for ourselves because we were people without fear. We didn't fear for anything in business or in life after the war. And that's why we risk a lot and most of us did well either in the United States or in different countries. I am in contact with people in Canada which are very prosperous and very well situated. It didn't come easy. Those people worked hard, the survivors. They worked from 5:00 in the morning 'til late at night, seven days a week. And we call it as, as perseverance, but it's a will to do something and to do something for our children that they should live much better than we used to live. And this gave us a lot of strength, and hope, and way to live and help our families.

INT: Did you ever question - is it okay to go on a little bit or...?

SOL: Another five, ten minutes.

INT: All right. Did you ever question your ability or desire to go on living after the liberation to, you know, seek out a family, you know to make your own family, to go on with your life?

SOL: It came naturally. We never thought, our minds, and our will to live, and our conditions kept us strong, and above everything to get established and get back to life. Maybe we realized that all the families we lost we won't be able to get them back anyway and for some reason there were not too many people who had just said, "All right, we got enough of that life and let's end it or something." But people who survived went through too much and started to see they are living again. I think that the strength and desire to live is greater than just to, to revenge, or to try and end your life or because it is not worth it anymore. For some reason I am 72, and I am still alive and I never believed that we are going to live so long and whatever.

INT: What role had Judaism played in your life since the war?

SOL: It played a lot. We were always, all of us who survived were always enthusiastic about Israel surviving and coming up as a country and we were always proud of them. And whenever a war came about we were very upset and knowing all the organizations, the Jewish from the Holocaust survivors good supporters of Israel. And (pause) we are pro-Israel and we are pro-life, and trying to escape the murderers' accusations of the Jewish people and all over. In the beginning in Israel what was happening, the whole world was against Israel and they tried to do an act for survival calling them as Hitlers, or whatever, as terrorists or something else. Only we Jews can understand why those people are fighting so great in Israel in order to survive because they knew what other countries did to the Jews. And a matter of fact the two or three from my, the eighteen people were in Israel, and I don't know what happened to them but one was a flyer, one was a - and they all joined the service and they did good for Israel. One of my friends, close friends where we slept together in the camps, Schwartzberg, he, I heard that he became an Airforce flyer. He probably, I don't know if he is still around or not. I lost contact. But they probably around.

INT: I think we will stop here if you want to stop about now. And I don't have too many more questions for you but I--

[Tape 6 - End Side 1] [Tape 6 - Side 2 - Blank] [Tape 7 - Side 1 - Begin]

INT: This is an interview with Sol Sultanik on July 18, 1994. After the war did you have any questions or doubts about getting married?

SOL: I got married in Germany. I came to the United States already married.

INT: Right, uh-huh. But as far as the idea of getting married, starting a family, was that anything that you questioned or thought much about?

SOL: If I wouldn't have been married probably I would get married over here. It's not that my life stopped right after the war and I just wanted to get backwards. I would probably go the way I went.

INT: Okay. How did you choose a spouse after the war?

SOL: This was by coincidence. After the war when I was liberated near Bergen-Belsen I was looking for some family members and I heard that there was a camp nearby. I was liberated about thirty miles from Bergen-Belsen. I never knew and I never realized that there was such a big camp like Bergen-Belsen after the war. And then as I came there, there were mostly women there and I found my first cousin over there, a girl, two actually, two sisters. They were, they went through the concentration camps and they were very very ill. They were very sick and this is where one of my cousins took care of A.S., my wife, and starting talking to them. She was very sick. She had typhoid and all kinds of problems. And as we were talking about, she used to live about two blocks from me in Krakow. And I didn't know her. So I knew the area, she knew the area and this is how we got together. And then we were transferred to one of the more stable camps near Frankfurt and this is where we got married.

INT: How were your decisions made in your marriage as far as were they joint decisions? Was it male decisions?

SOL: I feel that I was probably still the old fashioned way that I was supposed to take care of the family and not to have my wife work. But it didn't work out exactly the way you thought because we were fighting pretty badly after the war just to keep up with our needs and having nothing and living in those camps as supported by the, what were the (pause) the, I don't remember the organization anymore.

INT: Was it HIAS?

SOL: HIAS. The HIAS I think. So we were handed everything what we needed and just lived as we lived during the war, but this was a progressive camp because we had what we needed to eat and also survive. All right. Then we were transferred to a camp where they evacuated the

Germans from one town, and they gave it to the Jewish survivors and that's where they organized like a people who were running that area. And we were getting all the supplies, and they were cooking for us there, and all the foods and it was a regular DP camp they called it, a Displaced Person camp. And from that camp they made applications, and they filed all the applications, and people started to move from Germany to mostly to Israel and all the other countries, Canada, and South America and the United States. Most of the people went to Israel, Israel and the United States.

INT: How did your experiences in the war affect your desire to have children or did they affect your desire to have children?

SOL: I don't think I ever thought about it. It was no, no feelings for it, no desire actually. No, (pause) I didn't think about it at all, really. I didn't even think what's going to happen. Either I'll ever get married or whatever. (pause) I don't think it was a thought and I didn't just think the opposite way that I shouldn't have any children anymore because of the experience we had not to expose children to the same problems what we were exposed. A lot of people were thinking about it and they lived with that thinking that what we saw, what happened to the children and we ourselves were children when, when this happened. So we didn't even think that this is the right thing to do and have children or whatever. But it wasn't specifically, to me it wasn't just a thought and if I thought about it, then I just didn't think it's going to ever materialize or whatever.

INT: When did you all decide to have children?

SOL: Oh, this was, actually, I got married and--

INT: What year was that that you got married?

SOL: 1944 and I got, we, the first, I mean we have only one son and he was born in 1957. It was quite a while by the time we got that first and last child. And this happened here in the United States.

INT: Jeff was born here.

SOL: Yeah, he was born in New York, right.

INT: How did you deal with the war with Jeff? Did you discuss it? Were there issues that came up?

SOL: Very little, very little. He knew more or less that we survived the war in a way but the Holocaust as a whole was not as, how would you call it? Prevalent at that time. It wasn't as known in that time when he was born. It was just that we came from Germany, and we lived in Poland, and we didn't, never discuss directly the aspects of our past and everything. My wife didn't want to talk about it and we didn't talk too much. As he grew with his age he got himself more or less knowledgeable of the things that happened, and sometimes he asked me questions if I was there or what I did, and we talked about it a little more. And then before his marriage and

everything he, he knew more or less. He knew exactly what happened, and he was very sensitive to it, and he was beginning to fear that he is, in my opinion, that he is Jewish and that something like this can happen, and could happen and may happen again. And a matter of fact that I know a lot of survivors' children, they are very sensitive to it and they are always worried about the feelings from their parents telling them what happened in a countries like was never any difference between the Jews more or less and Gentiles. They lived together pretty well until the late 20's and the 30's when it started in Germany.

INT: When you say he was sensitive, how did he display this? I mean was it things that he said to you or things that he did?

SOL: No, he didn't feel right in school as being, since we lived here in Lansdale there were not too many Jewish friends he had in school. He has approximately, he probably about three, four Jewish people in that. And a matter of fact that in order to alleviate that problem we took him out from the public, after he finished public school and we enrolled him in the Germantown Academy where he felt much better with more Jewish students than he felt in the public school over here.

INT: Were there ever times that you thought about what you felt he should know or should not know about your war experiences when he was younger and as he grew up?

SOL: As he grew up I didn't, myself, talk too much about it and neither did A.S., my wife. We didn't reveal the problems to him. And in my opinion, for instance, I think the past was such a terrible experience that I couldn't even spell out what we went through. And why should he be exposed to things which we were exposed and we felt that maybe it's better if he doesn't know as much from our past, I think.

INT: Okay, thank you. What has been your philosophy about child rearing, you know, disciplining Jeff and how to handle any, you know, issues that would come up with him?

SOL: It was really maybe strange but we adopted more or less the American way of living. And I remember I hit him once, and then I was sorry and he remembered that. He remembered that forever. When was it? Yeah, I remember the date. When Kennedy was killed, and I was watching the television, and I was so absorbed with it and for some reason he didn't listen to me what I wanted him to do so I just, just hit him a little bit. And this was the first time and the last time and he remembered. He remembered that forever. He still remembers it now. Yeah.

INT: So when you say you adopted the American way, this to you is the American way?

SOL: Yeah, because we always were hit by our parents, our teachers, our anybody who took care of us. We were disciplined in school. If you did something wrong you got hit over your hand with a, with a ruler and otherwise with a things which are not knowing now, but this is the way we were brought up, and discipline were brought at home the same way and in school. The teacher had more or less had probably more authority than the parents in my life, for instance. And we listened to the teacher, and we had to obey and we were punished. We were punished

for any minimum little thing we ever did in school. And if the parents more or less, it wasn't in my family, but if some parents complained to the teacher that the children didn't obey certain things they should have, the teacher was punishing the child just from the words what the parents said.

INT: So what made you decide to adopt to the American way and not to hit?

SOL: I don't think that the right to adopt but knowing what happened to our person, to our children, we handled that child as a precious entity and we never wanted to hurt him in no way. A matter of fact that we always provided more for the child than we did to ourselves. Any money we made and any money we really could afford, we never tried to give the child what he really requires, or what he really wanted or he really had to get the most luxurious things in general which we would never use it for ourselves. Same thing in college. When he went to college I spent more on him in college than I and my wife spent at home, and maybe half of it we spent and twice as much we spend on him in college. Because we work hard, we try to accommodate and we didn't want to cut down on the education and everything. And we tried to give him the best.

INT: What was your philosophy about work, your work, the kinds of things that you should get involved in, how much you should work?

SOL: It wasn't really a question. We worked, actually, I and my wife too even though we worked like animals. We got up 4:30 in the morning and we worked 'til 8:00, 9:00 at night when I started my business. There is no limit and always no vacations. We didn't take any vacations in years. As a matter of fact, up 'til now I probably took about two weeks vacation all my life, but those were the type of life we adopted and this is what we did. I never worked for anybody else but for myself, and tried to accomplish more things, so I worked long hours, six, seven days a week and long hours during the days. As a matter of fact I'm still used to it, and I get up 5:00 in the morning and either I have something to do or not.

INT: How about recreation? Were there times that you took time with A.S. and Jeff to have some, just fun time, relaxing time?

SOL: Oh yes, we used to have friends and in New York, we used to go to New York very often, maybe every week or every two weeks and we had friends coming to our house. We had a share of good relations with other people and some recreation. Because on Sundays if we had to meet somebody, somebody would come to us, we took the time off for that purpose. Even though we worked long hours I was not pinned down to a nine to five time. I could work any hours I wanted to.

INT: How did you react to any problems or difficult times that Jeff had? You know, how did you help him handle it or how did you feel about his having difficult times?

SOL: Fortunately I never helped him in general. In the first grade and second grade I could help him out with certain problems in school. Then after that, fortunately, he took care of

himself. He always, never asked any questions of helping him with school work or anything else. My schooling was different entirely from his schooling, but the basics I had about the same as anywhere else with multiplying, and dividing, and all the arithmetic and everything else. I tried to find the better ways for him to get it a little easier through school. But then after the high school and the college he took care of himself and he took care very well. He was a good student, and without any outside help. And that's about it.

INT: Okay, well as far as Jeff's school, did you have any goals in your mind for him, aspirations that you felt he should accomplish?

SOL: Yeah, a matter of fact we wanted him to be the best. We pushed him more or less to be a doctor. And one time he went from the Germantown Academy to a Chestnut Hill Hospital and he saw the problems of people and everything and he turned away from it. And he aimed himself to be a lawyer. And this is what happened. We prepared him to be a, go into medicine, but then we left up to him, and we wanted him to go wherever he wanted and do whatever he wants to do.

INT: How do you want your son and your grandchildren to view you?

SOL: I don't see any difference between Jeff handling me as a parent or his wife. They are parents [unclear] her. We are both on the same level more or less and I don't think it ever comes up any difference. I really thanks G-d that I accommodate Jeff to the highest. I did everything I could for him and he realizes, he appreciates, and I am respected by him and by the whole family. And not that I am requesting any honors or something. I always did more for him than I did for myself and really it paid off. He appreciates and he, there's no, there's no day that he shouldn't call and there was no day through college that he didn't call everyday. I told him call collect and he did everyday. There was not a day that he didn't call and right now he does the same thing.

INT: How about your grandchildren? Are there certain things about you that you would like them to see in you?

SOL: Not that I, I, when it comes to my grandson, he is now eleven, he likes my stories from Poland and from my past. Not the horror stories, just stories from the normal life abroad and he adopted a lot of things and he likes those jokes, the old fashioned Jewish jokes, and he really remembers them and he loves it. The granddaughter is a little different. She doesn't like to adopt all those things, and she leans a little more to the normal and her mother's parents were, she has a normal experiences in their homes and whatever. But the grandson is really following more or less my steps. And not that I wanted him to do it but he likes it. He picks up those foreign words, and he never forgets and he remembers perfectly.

INT: Is Jeff more like you or more like A.S. in temperament?

SOL: Jeff is an easy-going person, and he is very sensitive to our well-being and everything. Anytime he knows that I have some problems and medically or other, he calls ten times a day or,

or he likes to be, if I was in the hospital there was not a day that he shouldn't stop over. And in my opinion he does everything what really should be done and he does it well.

INT: Okay, but his personality and his like outlook on things, do you think it's more like yours or more like A.S.'s?

SOL: In general, my viewpoints and A.S.'s viewpoints are more or less the same. And there are not such big differences in our outlooks in our life. Maybe she has different views in certain ways, but normally we adopted ourselves to a certain way of living and it suits both of us. And Jeff normally is a little bit more American way, because he married an American girl and she is more or less different in the ways of thinking in general than we are. You know we have different views altogether and in certain ways than the American women and the American people. I don't know, it sticks with us and I don't think we ever get rid of it. It's just the way it is.

INT: [unclear] thinks you're very special, I will say that. How do you feel that Jeff used his role in the family as far as making decisions and the new female/male balance in taking care of the family? How do you think he views his role?

SOL: I think he has a more modern role than we have, and, but he is very accommodating also in life, and in thinking that he married a girl who was probably a little bit different than he was because he really adopted our way of life and school and all over. And as he got married we stepped out of his life as much as we could and tried to, him to handle his own way and we didn't want to interfere or dictate any way what he should do, what he shouldn't do. Even though at sometimes the ways he did or his wife were not my way of doing, but we never complained or we never let him know that this is not our way of doing or something like that. And we tried to stay away. As close as we live to him, as far we were distance when it came to certain discrepancies. But I have to say one thing, that Jeff is very stable, and is very organized, and is very, I have to say knowledgeable and in general to keep those troubles away from his house. He, he is accommodating his life to ways of staying away from problems. He is very successful and he is very accommodating to the family, to my family, to me and also to his wife's family. And we get along very well with our in-laws, and we have no problems, and they respect us and we respect them fully. It's really, I couldn't ask for any better.

INT: You use the word accommodating. Do you see yourself as accommodating yourself in your own life, and marriage and family?

SOL: Yes, you can't find two persons the same. There's always some differences of opinions or way of life. I might like one thing and my wife might like some other things. When we have to go somewhere or we have to do something and there might be certain examples of differences but I'm trying to accommodate, I'm trying to give in. It's something like compromise. Compromise in my opinion is the best medicine in marriage and in life. If I don't compromise, sooner or later, my wife will compromise or, or we get together and try to remedy the things with certain compromises and agreements. That's the most important thing, I guess.

INT: Is this something that you saw with your parents in Poland that they would accommodate and compromise?

SOL: Yeah, it is. I don't know how the accommodations of my parents were. I was maybe too young to realize those things but I never saw any--

[Tape 7 - End Side 1] [Tape 7 - Begin Side 2]

SOL: There were never any differences of opinions which would hurt the normal life. Unfortunately, my parents had the biggest problem and the biggest discrepancies and everything were how to fight and make a living, how to really make a living. And this kept them so busy that they were slaves to their needs in general. This was in common in Poland that everyone was working very hard with no real rewards.

INT: What was it like coming to a new and strange land when you and A.S. came to America? What did it feel like for you? What were your...?

SOL: It was, it was strange in the beginning, it was very strange. We were used to a strange land because we lived in Germany after the war for a few years. This was also an experience which we didn't have. The only experience I had at home is nineteen, twenty years old and the war broke out at that time and we were just trying to survive and we never traveled anywhere. We never knew anything else but that little village where we used to live and confined in those problems all the time. All of a sudden the whole world opened up to us and thinking Germany, a big land also, and we were traveling there for a while and doing things and then America. America is also a world by itself and we didn't know how to start and what to do and where to get any help or any advice. We had to do it on our own. The only thing, so we got together with the American people who knew us from when we came over here, the only way they used to express themselves, "Are you making a living? Are you doing all right?" But naturally I couldn't understand in the beginning, "Are you making a living?" What do you mean by making a living? But then we understood what that word means. It was the most important thing to the newcomers and the people who asking those questions were also newcomers once as they came over here. And naturally those experiences and little by little we were doing things in New York and then we came over here to Pennsylvania and we built our life little by little. And it worked out pretty good.

INT: Do you see you and A.S. as having to rely only on yourselves or could you rely on help from the community or from friends and other people?

SOL: No, we never had a cent from any relief organizations. We never went on unemployment, we never did anything, we were never a burden to anybody's welfare. We always did it on our own. And hard work was the remedy to us, how we started to build our lives. Because remembering in Poland I was sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years old, I was so hungry to work and never found any work to do. And coming over here I was overwhelmed how much work there is and how much work you can do and we did it. And most of our friends, we were always in touch with other friends who came were also from Germany to the United States, and most of

them just snapped up very quickly and very successfully built their lives and very successful now also because of the work they, really they were not afraid of work.

INT: Did you have any support network here in the United States when you first came? Was there anyone to help you that you could rely on in the early days when you first came?

SOL: No, I had some relations here which were already here for a few years and only a span of two, three years they came before me from Germany. And we used to meet very often, and, but we couldn't get any help or any advice from them because they were in the same stages as we were. They were also working hard and little by little they rented apartments and they, which was a, the biggest problem was to get an apartment. Either it was in New York or it was here in Pennsylvania that not making any money and trying to get an apartment was very, very hard. But eventually it started to work and, and I could afford an apartment. Then as soon as it was very reasonable to get a house we bought a house. To buy a house that time it cost us about seventy, eighty dollars a month to buy a house with a couple of thousand dollars down and the rent was much more than the eighty dollars a month. So we choose to do that and after a while the real estate appreciated, and we sold and made some money and then go higher. And this is the way it happened.

INT: Yeah, but before you were able to rent an apartment where did you live?

SOL: I was renting. I was renting first when I came over here I was renting for a while so every three month they told us to move because they were trying to sell the house. So in one year we moved about four, five times. And then we had troubles, not everybody wanted to take us with a child and we had problems to get an apartment. That's why we were trying to sell everything we had, all the jewelrys, whatever we accumulated, and to make that down payment and buy a house because we got tired of moving four times a year. And finally we bought a row home here in Lansdale and from there we went further.

INT: How old was Jeff when you moved here to Lansdale?

SOL: He was about a year.

INT: Oh really.

SOL: Yeah.

INT: Do you feel that you can trust the American community at this point to feel safe here?

SOL: I don't like what's happening, to tell you the truth. I see a lot of problems which were known to me in Europe and those things are really happening over here too. I don't like the Christian Coalition meddling in the school problems, and also I see they are coming out with problems against abortions and everything. I don't think that religion has the right to do those things over here what they were doing in Europe. It's exactly the same thing what happened in Europe. If it wouldn't have been for the religion in schools there would have been less problems

with the Jews. They were teaching the students Christ was killed by the Jews. They were teaching all those things which were negative to Jewish people and that's why the hatred increased much more rapidly than it wouldn't be for school teachings. And I feel that that religion in school has no place and shouldn't be any place here in the United States. And we lived over here for 250 years without it and we can live another 250 years because I know that this problem will not cure the crimes. It will increase the hatred and it will probably wherever hatred there is crime. And I think they should keep it for any price the separation of school and church.

INT: Okay, now how does that compare to how you felt about America when you first moved here from Europe and your trust in the country and what was happening then?

SOL: We had much better times. We used to live over here, not closing any doors, going to New York and live in this community over here, nobody bothered anything. And we didn't feel any, we felt secure as long as we went our own proper way and not against the law, we were very secure and very, (pause) I would say safe. And now it's changing. It's changing a lot. It's too many weapons in the streets. There's too many of other things which the law cannot control. And people are doing mostly things which should not be done because the control over the children or by the parents is diminishing, and there is no respect for the parents, and there's no respect for anyone and even for the country. I noticed that time when I came over here there was a better respect for the country, and the parents, and everything else, and this is deteriorating rapidly over here now.

INT: How about being Jewish or acknowledging that you were Jewish when you first moved over to the United States, did you have any fears about that or...?

SOL: I, being in New York I had no fears at all. Coming to Lansdale I experienced certain things where I was not maybe respected as much or liked as much because I am Jewish. And that time here in Lansdale even the Italians were not liked also. There were a lot of (pause) people who just wanted to keep the way it was before and they wanted, they didn't want to try and get new people in. They were more of separatists. They liked to keep it the way it was. But this was rapidly changing because new homes were being built and new settlements coming in around those villages over here and people got used to it.

INT: Do you experience any regrets or disappointments about what you could have done with your life had the war not derailed it?

SOL: Being in Poland and being sentenced to their life and as we all know that the Polish people are not receptive to Jews, they are very hateful to the Jewish religion and to Jewish people, I would have probably lived the same way and got old in Poland not knowing any better. I wouldn't have the ways of departing from Poland. I would have to stay the way my parents did there and live the way they lived. To immigrate to the United States was not easy from Poland unless you are wealthy, and had connections, and had some sponsors who took you over here or to any other land. So I am happy with the life in the United States and that I landed over here because I would never accomplish anywhere else what I accomplished over here. The only

problem is that the way I came over here, and from the sufferings we were susceptible to in order to accomplish this life, I don't think it was worth it, and 'cause we lost all our family and everything else. But I don't regret that I came over here and built in my life over here.

INT: When you had any difficult decisions to make or difficulties in your life who did you speak to? Or did you speak to anyone? Did you discuss these with anyone?

SOL: As I progressed in my business and, and like anyone else I needed some advice, legal advice or, or some filing some papers which I was not capable to do, I had to look for legal help. And I found a good lawyer, and he became my friend, and I had confidence in him and he protected me the best he could. And but in general I always, I never used that lawyer for everything. I used him maybe for certain time of legal papers I had to file with the bank or something, and, and connected with my business only when I couldn't do it myself. I had to have legal help because of the banks. I obtained a lot of mortgages and everything, and the banks used lawyers to prepare all the papers, and I had to sign all those papers and everything else. Otherwise I always depended on myself and used my own common sense and my own knowledge to do the best I can.

INT: And how about in personal issues, were there ever times that you felt you needed to speak to someone or did you rely on yourself also at those times?

SOL: Yeah, most of it. Personal issues didn't come up as, as often. It's just normal life. When I had Jeff we looked for a place, and we joined the synagogue over here and we got friends. A matter of fact a lot of friends in the congregation here, and then we had friends where we lived, and we adapted ourselves pretty well and we have a lot of friends a matter of fact. And I don't think we have too many enemies.

INT: I agree with that. What do you see as the successes of your life? The couple of things that you are most proud of as your successes.

SOL: Listening to people, I learned a lot from people. As I worked I was always very accomplishing, very accommodating to people. And a matter of fact that I, as I started the business I never knew anything about business, and the people taught me what they want, and you always find that if people are knowledgeable and they teach you the way they want to have things done. So I learned a way where you cannot cover up anything, and you cannot cheat, and you do what the people want and this was the best advice I ever got. And I was more or less a perfectionist in the business. I wanted to have everything done perfectly, and this what kept me going and what kept my success growing.

INT: That's wonderful. Is there anything that you would have done differently?

SOL: Probably, yes. I (pause) I probably wouldn't have settled over here in the small towns. I love New York and everything else, but the circumstances directed me over here and I don't regret. I think that's right now it's just as good to live in the suburbs, maybe better than in the big cities. And I don't know if anything I would have done differently. I just, everything I did is by

coincident. I wouldn't probably find ways because I found another refugee over here which made partnership with me, and then we got together about \$10,000 and we went in business. And then we took in an Italian fellow who didn't have any money at all and we tried to build up a business in which I didn't know anything about. I was knowledgeable in the business as a whole 'cause my father always was in business, and he tried to teach me arithmetic and how to figure out things. And we came to a point where when I started to do any business I followed my father's advice, and he said, "When you figure out things which cost you so much, and you have to complete it, and it cost you so much and as long as you don't see any loss take the job. Don't figure out how much profit you are going to make. As long as you don't see any losses take the job and do it." So the most important thing is and I realized that if you take a job and you see how much can I lose? If people figure how much can I make, there's a big difference. If you try to make too much, either you don't get the job or you, you will make what you are figuring. So as long as you can figure out that the cost plus expenses and all the other things provide no loss, take it.

INT: Do you have any regrets about anything that you had mentioned about moving to Lansdale you might not have moved here, but things that might have been mistakes in your life, something that you regretted, a disappointment?

SOL: I was disappointed in my life myself because I was always good natured and some people with my, in my spot, they made three times as much. I never, I never went to court. I never wanted to get the last penny out of the business. I always gave in, and I always compromised, and my biggest mistake was in maybe in business that I was always too anxious to sell. As soon as I had a little bit of property I wanted to sell instead of holding onto things which I would have made ten times as much. So, but still it worked out in the long run. I might not have what I could have had but I still live, and I still eat, and we are still surviving very well. And I don't think I would say that I did something wrong. But I did a lot of people good because I accommodate a lot of people with my business that they probably could never afford a house, and I make them qualify to buy a house, and they appreciate it very much because in the years up 'til now more or less in the '80's, up 'til the 80's real estate appreciated tremendously. People used to buy a home from me for \$15,000 and they kept selling it for a hundred and twenty [\$120,000]. So they, and I pushed a lot of people to buy those homes and they realized after a while that's why I had a lot of friends and nobody, and everybody appreciated what I used to do and how I did it that they could afford it. And they did it what they wouldn't have done it probably without me.

INT: Do you see anything in your behavior or your personal desires at home in your personal life that are a result of the war years, you know like behaviors that might, that you can see a reflection of what had happened during the war?

SOL: Maybe there is a part of it still stays with me that I am not too anxious to go out, and have a lot of fun, and to have a lot of adventure and everything else. And maybe what I would have done it probably if I wouldn't have my past I would probably be more anxious to try things and ways to get away or do something which maybe would be a little bit more beneficial to me. But thanks G-d I am 72 years old and I am still alive and I, what I'm doing I can only say maybe

I did everything right because I came to that point and not probably having the result what I had otherwise I would probably live a little better and more, (pause) they call it more satisfactory life than I had over here. I didn't live up with my life to, to the highest satisfaction maybe. But--

INT: Whose highest satisfaction?

SOL: I mean people are living with a little more of self satisfaction. They don't try and give away everything and leave nothing for yourself. I mean we could have probably afford a lot better things and nicer things in our life which we didn't do and now since probably we can afford it it's maybe a little bit too late because of our age and of our discomforts from the medical standpoint. So we missed certain ways of life which we didn't use maybe to our satisfaction. That's what I meant to say.

INT: I see. So what do you think it was about the war years that kept you back from doing this? You said that certain adventuresome things.

SOL: I was always afraid of using up my reserves, and money and everything which I probably did it otherwise. I always wanted to practice that way of becoming more or less secure and sometimes I aimed it too far to try to be over secure. So maybe those are the results from the past because we didn't have anything that time and all of a sudden you get something so you feel that this something may not be enough to do it right.

INT: Okay, I understand that now. Thank you.

SOL: All right.

INT: What has been the role of faith in G-d in your religion and tradition, Jewish tradition in your life since the war?

SOL: I preserved more or less the tradition. I didn't exercise the religion the way I would probably do it if it wouldn't be for that war. I lost the faith in G-d during the war and I never recaptured that. Even though I go to the synagogue and I do whatever it's needed to be a member of the synagogue, a member of the community, I can never regain that faith in G-d. And the every time usually at home G-d is everything, G-d the one we respect, G-d is the one. He is going to help you, G-d is the one who is going to kill you, G-d is the one above everything. Those fears and those aims to G-d disappeared. Disappeared right after--

[Tape 7 - End Side 2] [Tape 8 - Begin Side 1]

INT: This is an interview with Sol Sultanik on July 18, 1994. You were telling me about your faith in G-d and that you could not recapture that after the war.

SOL: Right. And I feel comfortable with the things I have. Naturally my grandson and my granddaughter, they attend the synagogue and they are going to, to be susceped to all the bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah, and all the other rituals which I respect and I wouldn't advise them any

other way. Just for myself, I personally lost the faith and I don't think I will regain it or I am trying to regain it. I saw too much what happened and since that time I say, "Where is G-d?" I always ask, "Where is G-d? Where is the one who will always believed? Why are those innocent people being killed and there is no response from G-d? Why do they kill us? Why do they kill so many good people who never did anything wrong in their lives? Children, two month old, six years old, twelve years old being killed, and there is no mercy and no, no G-d." And this is where I lost my faith and I don't think I will ever regain it and I'm not trying to even.

INT: Did this happen for you during the war or was (?)

SOL: During the war, mainly during the war. Seeing all those things happen and during the war we didn't practice religion anyway. Plenty of other problems not to think of G-d.

INT: You talk about when you went to a camp, I don't know if your father was in the camp. It was Kol Nidre and you all stood outside.

SOL: Yeah, no, this was without my father, right. This was the first day when we entered the camp and it was just the day before Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is, it was the day of Kol Nidre and this is where we were singing that Kol Nidre song outside just in the front of the barracks not knowing what those barracks are going to mean to us and not knowing what the, this was just the beginning of our problems. We came from more or less from the homes, even broken homes or, or neglected homes or whatever, but still it was a home. And all of a sudden you landed in a, in a camp surrounded with wires, and dogs, and all kinds of guards and weapons. We never saw a rifle in our life and doing something which all of a sudden we are facing all those problems. And this was our first day which I never forget. And then I started to have less faith in everything in G-d which we saw before, how those children and everything before we came to that camp, how they killed those people in ghettos and all over before I came to that camp.

INT: What made you go back to a synagogue after the war?

SOL: I don't know what happened, still when I came over here I wanted to be with Jewish people for some reason, regardless what I. A lot of people from us came, and they separated from the Jewish religion and they went out of this whole thing and lived, they gave up the Jewishness, they gave up. They took a name, which is not Jewish and they forget about it. It wasn't too many people though what they did things like that. But still my friends and I we came to this town and somehow, somewhere I didn't feel as comfortable and as to my satisfaction then with Jewish people more or less. That's why I joined the, I wanted to try and join a synagogue to meet again Jewish people and see what they are over here. And naturally, in my opinion always, was always that the Jewish people always had the same thoughts, and have the same fears, and the same vision that I had. And that's why I started to feel more comfortable with the synagogue people than with the people I was surrounded with.

INT: Did you feel that you wanted Judaism to continue for your child even though you did not have a belief in G-d anymore?

SOL: Yes, I wanted him to be, to do the things which are recommended by the Jewish religion, and I didn't stop from that and that's what I did.

INT: What do you think Jeff's beliefs in G-d are?

SOL: Well Jeff has a, (pause) it's I don't know. To me it's a strange belief because he does not go too much to the synagogue. He doesn't go too often. But still he is not against sending the children to Hebrew school, and he is not against supporting the synagogue, which he does support, and he is not against himself being somebody else than Jewish. So maybe because I did not insist too much for him to be more Jewish after he was born than I did, but I didn't try to discourage him from it or I didn't try to encourage him to it either. So still he grew up very well and he still feels Jewish. He makes the children feel Jewish. And sometimes I was thinking to myself, I wish I wasn't Jewish. Simple as that but we are here and we continue it.

INT: Do you know if he believes in G-d?

SOL: I would say so, he believes in G-d. I don't know if he respects G-d as he should be respected, but maybe because I didn't teach him too much as to believe like my father always said, "G-d is everything, G-d is this." I never did that to him. I never did it and the only thing I did is we went to synagogue wherever we went together, and he came bar mitzvah over here and he followed all the rituals up 'til now. He is not the most person who attends. He may attend the synagogue once a year or twice and that's about it. But I don't think he likes to get away from it or he likes to get closer to it.

INT: When you said that your father taught you that G-d was everything, did you, as a teenager did you believe this that G-d was everything?

SOL: Yes, we did believe because everything what happened just G-d. G-d, G-d did this and G-d did that. If we had a misfortune in the family it's G-d's will and I was, I believed strictly in that. There was no other believes in Poland. Either you were Jews and you were conducting yourself like [unclear] and we were not extremely Hasidic Jews that were, we had a kosher home and everything else. But we didn't eat milk after meat. We kept the six, seven hours whatever were recommended and we were keeping those rituals going and then during the war and everything I changed. I changed entirely but I still have, I still have to say that I am Jewish inside, and I respect the Jewish faith, and I support Israel very very much because they were, I wish they would have been in existence when we were there in Poland, that would probably have helped us. That's the only cure in my opinion to the Jewish faith that Israel should be strong and well. It gives the Jewish people more respect, a better home and the whole life. We didn't have anything. We didn't have anybody who worried about us, nobody. And like a bunch of sheep we were pushed from one place to the other and nobody cared about us.

INT: How about this idea of G-d being powerful over everything? Did your brothers and sisters believe that?

SOL: Yeah.

INT: How about when your mother died, was there any discussion with your brothers and sisters that how could G-d have done this?

SOL: No, this was a, we understood that this is a common way of life that people have to die and she died peacefully. She, my mother died before the war and she was buried the Jewish way and everything and it's not like the people were killed. And then a lot of Jewish people changed their mind with that, you know when, when they started, the Germans and the Poles and all the other people started to shoot and kill people, especially Jewish people. (interruption)

INT: I'd like to ask you some questions about your connection with Holocaust organizations and literature and things that at this particular point. Do you read any Holocaust literature or see any films about the Holocaust?

SOL: Yes, as a matter of fact I support the Holocaust Museum and I'm an honorable member [Honorary Member] there in Washington and, and I get all the literature from them. A very good friend of mine is the initiator over there; Miles Lerman is a good friend of mine. He is from Vineland, and he is the man who initiated the whole program. Yeah.

INT: And how about watching Holocaust films or programs on TV or in the movies?

SOL: I didn't watch. It was the first time about two years ago when a Holocaust film came out first. I saw that. A.S. didn't want to watch at the time. She saw part of it and that's it. And now "Schindler's List" I went because it was in the town where I lived, in the ghetto where I was and it came and A.S. too, my wife, she was in the house. You could spot even the house where in she was in that camp. I was only in transition. I was only there about two, three weeks and A.S. was there for four years; three/four years she survived through there. And she was not on Schindler's List. She was in the, on those quarries where he was shooting those people and everything.

INT: When you say you were in transition were you in Plaszow or in the ghetto itself?

SOL: In, no. I was in the ghetto first and then I left the ghetto in the beginning. It was only for a short time in the ghetto and I went to my father's town. And then I, as I was transported to that camp and I was working in that Rzeszow where they built the airplanes and then as the Russians were pushing west they sent us out of that camp and we were, first camp from there was Plaszow was Krakow. This is where we went and we stood only there for a while because they were, we were in transfer. This was not a camp where they could accommodate or they actually destroyed too many people in that camp in Plaszow. There were plenty of people dying but they didn't have that, the crematoriums where, where they burning people.

INT: How important is it for your, well for Jeff and for your grandchildren to see it? For you personally, how important do you feel it is?

SOL: I advised Jeff to see it. I don't think he saw it yet and either he is reluctant or, or whatever. I don't insist on it. I told him once and let him use his own judgement. (interruption)

INT: How important do you feel it is for the non-Jewish community to see “Schindler's List”?

SOL: It is important to show. Actually, they don't even show all of the problems we went through. A matter of fact when Goeth - that was the camp leader, did you see that?

INT: Yes, I did.

SOL: When he was hung he was hung for a reason that every Friday he used to get out and gather all the people and pick out about as many as he wanted, people to hang and die. Every Friday it was a ritual. It was [unclear] came out on that horse, on a white horse and with the dogs and pick out at least ten, twenty people every week and he hung them. And the people, all the other residents from the, from the camp had to watch it with music and everything else. That's why they chose him to die by hanging at the end of the film. But they didn't show all those [unclear] he used to select. The only thing that they showed on that film that he took his rifle and he shot here and there a few people, but he murdered hundreds and thousands of people the way he did with the hanging and all the other problems.

INT: Does the Holocaust affect your political views?

SOL: I think it does. It does. Everything which is turned against the Jewish people makes me very upset, and angry, and frustrated and depressed when I hear what the people say. And mainly the people who say that it never happened and there are people who would believe it and make the Jews look like in their mind that they are liars and anything else. This hurts me very badly because there is enough proof and the whole history over here that it did happen. The Germans are not angels. They are paying those restitutions to the people who survived. I don't get any rent but my wife gets some restitution. They are, they wouldn't pay if this wouldn't happen and they wouldn't, they recognize that this is that happened, but they want to forget about it very, very, very fast and they forgot about it already. As a matter of fact it's reviving again in Germany and this bothers me very much that those skinheads are not controlled by the Germans. And they are doing whatever they want and the government is keeping their eyes closed, because in my opinion there is plenty of government officials who were those Gestapo and SS troopers in the government.

INT: Do you think anything can be done about this, like as a Jew living in America?

SOL: I think we should support the American Jewish Congress, support B'nai Brith, support all the organizations who try to discourage those liars, and hoodlums, and all the other people telling those stories and mainly discourage the American Congress itself that they are trying to close their eyes to the same thing. And a matter of fact a lot of Congress people now coming into the Congress are not too friendly to Jews anyway. So those things should be always kept in control and if anything happens like that, the Jewish Congress and all the other organizations should have enough power, enough ways of getting to it and fight it.

INT: Do you think the Holocaust Museum in Washington will help fight those (?)

SOL: It helps. I think, I don't think it's going to teach anybody anything but it will just maybe show that those things happened, that we are not telling any, any lies, that we are not liars. We are not trying to blow something up for our convenience or for our advantage, that those things happened and they happened much worse than they show. Because there is a lot of things they cannot even show. They cannot even, it would be too drastic for the people to absorb. And I know and my wife knows and anybody else who went through that, that this would probably not bring any support or any, people wouldn't even be able to look at it because it's so drastic. They show now the people in Africa who died from hunger. This is how we looked like and the people don't like to, to see it, to see all those things anymore. They are happening but they are against the, the people's wish to see it.

INT: Did you visit the museum in Washington?

SOL: Not yet. A.S. was there once. I am going to go too. I know a lot. I know more or less everything that is there.

INT: Oh sure. What do you think is the, do you think there is a purpose that is served for survivors to go to the museum?

SOL: Yes. They can contribute maybe something more to it. I personally went through labor camps where I probably know what they are going to show over there and went through enough of places where those things happened and to me it's familiar. It's not pleasant but it's familiar and any like "Schindler's List," I look at it, it's familiar to me and I know those things happened there. Naturally they are not showing everything but they can't. They can't make a film to show everything because nobody would go and see it. I think he [unclear] it pretty good in order to show the people that those things happened. Mainly the Germans, how they behaved and how they evacuated people with no respect for humanity and anything else.

INT: Okay, we're at the end of that section, so you want to stop today? Okay.

[Tape 8 - End Side 1] [Tape 8 - Side 2 - Blank] [Tape 9 - Begin Side 1]

SOL: And since I came to the United States I never worked for anybody else, just for myself. And naturally the hours I spent for myself working were much harder, and longer, and live without basic vacation times and really are more pleasurable things for myself and my wife. We just kept our eyes open and always the attention to be able to survive later. And so we lost out whatever we normally should have done, but now as they say in our saying that half of your life you lose your health in order to make money and the other half of your life you lose your money in order to regain your health. So this is the way we really came to and this is becomes true over here. If you lose your life first in the beginning where you can enjoy yourself but you are too busy to try and make a living, and then when you can enjoy your life your health is just not there.

INT: Were you and A.S. in agreement about this, this focus on your...?

SOL: Not exactly. A.S. always tried to slow me down and say, "You are doing too much, you don't have to." And for some reason I kept doing it even though I had a lot of complaints and also warnings from A.S. especially when she said don't do it. But then A.S. herself went into business and she was practically doing the same thing that I was doing. So, but now I am still working and she is mostly retired. And I know that I should take more time out and do something which I believe in five years I won't be able to do it at all. So we're trying, we're trying. That's it.

INT: Looking back, how would you describe the mechanism by which you were able to rebuild your life after the war years?

SOL: I don't know how to describe. It's not easy but in my opinion people who survived and people who lived like to live, they just won't take their life because of the past or getting disgusted and end your life. So we kept going and the circumstances of life and the pressures keep you going especially when you have a child, then all your mind in our instance was directed to that child and any little bit A.S. was very, very concerned. Any little thing happened to the child she was always afraid that this might be the end, she might lose him. In some instances she personally, I was not as touched as she was. She was very [unclear] mostly, any little thing and she was reading those books and she found out that this instance or whatever happens may contribute to this kind of sickness or this kind of sickness. And she was a little bit overprotective and over worried. And but the age of growing up just became normal and all the worries she had were probably unnecessary, but they were there and interfered in the regular normal life, I know. Maybe it would have better if we would have had two children instead of one. The worries would have been spread out to a little more. But actually this is what happened and in the beginning was really tough. She was really so afraid of everything. Wherever he went, whatever happened she was very panicky and very, very worried.

INT: And how were you able to handle that or respond to that? What was your reaction?

SOL: It wasn't normal. It wasn't pleasant, but I couldn't do anything about it. I said the age will cure everything. I mean the life will cure everything. I mean as he grows older he will become, he will outgrow all those sicknesses. Actually they were not very serious sickness but anything, anything, his stomach or something he had cramps, and he had cramps a lot of times because he, for some reason he was nervous, and everything he didn't like or he was afraid of he had cramps. And those cramps were persisting and my wife, A.S., thought that they are permanent and he will never get out of it. And this is what she was really concerned in the beginning. Oh, this was a period, probably of five, ten years in the beginning of his first growing up and then it subsided. But the only, only time really cured this whole thing, and she also was going out too much to the doctors and they always found something. She was afraid of herself too that something is growing and something is going to get out of hand. So I decided that time that best thing would be for her just to get some kind of an occupation. And a matter of fact since she became occupied and she had that nursery school, she became busy and everything and she didn't have so much time to think about herself. And worry, she worried about everything and she still worries right now but those things cured a lot. I think that the twenty-five years of her being occupied and being in business improved the worries and other conditions which she had before.

And I don't know why it happened, why she was so concerned or something but it has something to do with the past I guess. Yeah, because it was really unusual, it wasn't normal to be afraid if he starts coughing or if he starts something, he has a little pain or a cramp or something. So looking back he grew up, and he grew up healthy and he is normal. Nothing was wrong actually with him in the beginning, but it was a lot of concerns and unnecessary concerns which she had, and I didn't want him to fear too much. I told him, just say sometimes, I said, "Just leave those doctors out and let him grow without doctors," because it was too much, really attention for it. So I was thinking maybe it was because it was the only son or there was worries but she was, I think she was, affected from young life because she, she came to the concentration camp at the age of nine and she knew how hard it was for children to survive over there so she was really probably affected by that. And I knew that the time cures everything. Time is the best cure for children and for anybody, but it worked out, but to live with it it's not easy.

INT: How did you learn that, that time cures?

SOL: Experience, experience makes you, makes you more knowledgeable and I knew, any, any even now sicknesses but at our age, at my age time is not with me. Time may cure and time may kill too. So it's, but if you're young, normally young and time is a good way to cure.

INT: How did you cope with the hardships and disappointments in your life, especially in during the war years?

SOL: If you get used to the hardships you live with them comfortably and this was always the case. If you don't know any better and if you lived with hardships and discomfort, sometimes you are happier with the discomforts and with the hardships than if you'll become comfortable and have everything you need. As a matter of fact, I know from people who came from the Soviet Union. They were very depressed over there, they lived in a area where they were used to live, and they had all the discomforts in the world and everything and they came to the United States and they were so unhappy because they lost their roots. And the discomforts sometimes don't mean anything if you live with them and you, because you don't see, you see that everybody else has the same discomfort and you come in in luxury all of a sudden it's not the best cure. A lot of people really suffered and they wanted to go back because they couldn't get used to the life over here because hunger is a bad condition, but luxury on the other hand if you're starved, if you'll satisfy your hunger, hunger can be satisfied within two days. Once you start eating and you have enough food then the other things come afterward which are worse than the discomforts itself.

INT: How do you handle the good times, and the happiness and success that you've had?

SOL: I handle it right. I have a lot of friends, and I have a lot of people and I live charitably. I give a lot to charities and giving, to me and A.S., is a very satisfied condition, I mean or deeds which we always did. And either our son and our family needs or not we always keep giving. And I told my son and everybody, "I'd rather give you now than you start waiting for my passing." So whatever I can I give you now and even if we don't leave too much it's better to give now in a gift. And that's what A.S., A.S. was very giving and she is wherever she sees

needs, she sees needs she tries to meet them. And I am also in the same mind. It is somehow a satisfaction when we know that somebody needs something and we can help, we give. And this is part of our living and thanks G-d we went through hard times and we were still giving. And we never said no to anything.

Never forget one thing in my life, you know that man, too, from insurance. I had no job, I had no future and no prospective to get a job and anything and the man came in and he sold me insurance. He sold me insurance because I couldn't refuse not to take it 'cause he said it's necessary to me. And I bought insurance not having any job, not having ways of paying it and not having, and I still paid for that insurance and I bought the insurance. And I'll never forget that, because that man was so pressing and insisted on it. It's hard to believe that you don't have a way to make a living and somebody is selling you insurance. And it was really funny, but it happened.

INT: What memories are the strongest for you?

SOL: I remember people whom we grew up with from the younger age and not knowing what happened to them and how. And we lost all our friends, all our families and all our close relations and everything. I just miss that and I remember that a lot.

INT: I didn't want to cut you off if there was more you wanted to say.

SOL: What was your question? No, what was your question? I don't remember.

INT: The question that I asked you?

SOL: Yeah.

INT: What were the strongest memories?

SOL: Probably I think that those are the strongest memories. Right. Uh-huh.

INT: Are there any feelings of guilt about anything that happened?

SOL: Yes, there are certain guilts, as you grow up you are (pause) we were sometimes wild children and didn't listen properly to their parents. And once you lose your parents then your feelings become like a guilt that probably if we would have taken care of our parents a little bit more closer and better this wouldn't have happened. But those are the guilts, but actually it's not our fault. It's we were a matter of growing up and with parents. We can't be just like a robot and the parents were understanding, but since the parents are not here as they say, that you can only treasure your parents after you lose them. And this is true. As you have them you don't realize what kind of a treasure you have, but after you lose them then you realize the pain and discomfort and everything.

INT: How would you summarize the impact of the Holocaust on your life and the life of your children, your child and your grandchildren?

SOL: As I said before, the love to the child and to the worries about it were really sometimes out of normal experience, but we always worried about the children and we always tried to give the children much more than we could afford. There were times where the child used up 80% of our income and we only lived with 20% and we were going back to just one child. So you can imagine how much we were trying and giving to that child and forgetting about yourself. And I don't know, I think it's maybe it is normal for a parent to do that, but in some instances I don't see it. I see the parents it's first me and then you, which is normal.

INT: Would you describe yourself as hopeful or pessimistic?

SOL: I am pessimistic. Everything I see is pessimistic. My wife is a little bit more hopeful but I try to live with it and I am pessimistic, very pessimistic normally. Even if everything works right I still see that some loopholes in some other ways and may turn that thing around. So always look at the negative side. But this is my nature.

INT: Are you generally trusting or suspicious of people?

SOL: Very trusting, very trustful and I got hurt a lot of times too because I trust everybody. But in life we, if you don't think, you have losses and you have gains. If the gains outweigh the losses you are still in good shape. But I am trustful. I am trust, I trust everybody. But naturally I'm not too like say stupid that I believe ones who I shouldn't believe, but in general I believe more and I trust more people than I should normally trust. But it doesn't hurt. It doesn't hurt me at all.

INT: Do you generally feel safe or frightened for yourself?

SOL: I feel safe. I am not afraid of going out, or doing this, or doing that but I am frightful. I am always, I can always see as a pessimist can see that everything can go wrong. You know even if I go somewhere, we enjoy ourselves, I never see the way and the, way very positive. I always have that negative approach. But I'm not fanatic about it. I'm functioning normally and even though I am pessimistic, actually. A lot of people are like that, just they get up and they see the sun is bright and shining and you out, "Oh, it's probably going to rain."

INT: How about for A.S.? Do you feel safe or frightened for her?

SOL: I am concerned. I am more concerned. I am frightened if something goes wrong, if she becomes sick or something I always worry about it but it doesn't interfere with our life. It's not, it's not a hinderness, but as I said it's the pessimism is, is the always there.

INT: How about for Jeff? Do you feel generally safe for him? Or (?)

SOL: I feel comfortable with him but as normal I don't, I'm concerned and so is A.S. Wintertime as he goes on jobs and he travels in the ice we are so concerned and he knows about it. He calls wherever he can. He gets there, he calls. And [unclear] we are very, very concerned and worried that something, something may happen. And but in general I don't think he is. He is a much more outgoing and much more, I don't think he is pessimistic. He is not. He has a good outlook for life, and this is just the opposite. And he never thinks of things going wrong. And the children are the same way. They are very, very outgoing and--

INT: The grandchildren?

SOL: Yeah, and they take chances. And in my opinion he takes more chances than I would have taken. So that's why I say they are more positive and if you're positive you take more chances and you'll take more risks.

INT: Where do you think he got his positive outlook?

SOL: I believe from the schools he went to and everything, I didn't have those opportunities to go to college or do anything. My life was much different. It was contained to one, one circle going and worry all the time about the next day. Naturally if you have a job and you are educated or you have something in your head which nobody can take it away, you are a little bit more secure. I was always insecure. I was always afraid that this might run out and what am I going to do next? With him it's a little different. If he loses one job he lives the American way, so he will get another one.

INT: Some of these questions that I wanted to finish with you have answered, so let me just close this main section of questions. I'll close with this one question: How do you view the future for yourself, for the Jews? What is your view of the future? Do you feel positive about it?

SOL: Not too positive. I'm always worried about it. I'm always concerned that for some reason the Jewish life may be lost again and may be squashed and the whole. Because we have too many enemies and too many people who wishes are us ill, simple as that. The churches, the religions are all more or less against the Jewish faith, even the best. And they are preaching and they are continuing to preach everything and negative about Jews. No, the Pope expressed himself and said it's time to, not to blame the Jews for, for Christ, for killing Christ or whatever what they used to do. They still teaching and preaching the same thing even though that the Pope tries to revise, that hatred to Jews is still there in the world and I don't think it will ever disappear.

I feel uncomfortable with that and the only comfort I have is because of Israel, the whole Jewish situation improved a lot. We have somebody who takes care of that word Jews. If something comes drastic they fight, they get back to the people who, who tries to hurt him. And the stronger Israel is going to be the better it is going to be for the whole Jewish world wherever Jews are and they ought to have some respect. We didn't have Israel before. Israel would have been in existence when the Holocaust happened, they would have screamed so loud all over the world that maybe it would, somebody would have listened. But there was nobody there in Israel

to do that. And now I feel a little bit more comfortable with that because Israel has, as even though they are giving up land, and they are giving up everything to the Arabs, and sometimes I feel that they are going to be surrounded and it might not survive. But the way they are doing I feel that they have enough strength over there and enough positive way of living that they will survive and they will be in existence forever. So this is one comfort I feel it might be for every Jewish people all over the world as long as they are in existence.

INT: Okay. And is there anything that happened during the war years that you have found especially difficult to share with your, with A.S. or Jeff, with your family?

SOL: (pause) I don't know. I don't think it would have changed anything. Sometimes I had feelings of guilt that I should have never left my father and go on my own. I probably would have been dead together with my father. I wouldn't have probably have survived because my survival and those are the guilts I have. But A.S. has different circumstances where her mother put her in, in a camp just to save her and her brother was--

[Tape 9 - End Side 1] [Tape 9 - Begin side 2]

INT: Sol Sultanik on August 12, 1994. After the war and you came to the United States, how did you perceive people's interest in the Holocaust? Is it something that you talked about? Is it something that there were discussions about and how did you perceive the...?

SOL: I didn't encounter especially any special interest in the Holocaust. Everybody was aware of it, and it was pretty new, and very known, and the whole world was actually getting the news from it, and it was very receptive, I would say in the beginning. I personally didn't feel any different. They called me greenhorn anyway at first before the Holocaust survivor. And a greenhorn meant everything. Either you are a survivor or not a survivor. So I got used to it and I didn't take any special preference as to the Holocaust issue because everybody who came to the United States were basically and mostly Holocaust survivors from the Jewish people. So we were all survivors. And as far as the American people are concerned, they knew what we went through, and they knew about the Holocaust and they were finding out more or less from the individual people what actually happened.

INT: Do you see any difference today in the perception of the war years?

SOL: Yeah, today it is worn out. The Holocaust, most of the people don't like to hear about it and don't want to hear about it. And a matter of fact there is a lot of denials right now which bothers me very much and it, in my opinion there is not too much interest anymore in those people because it happened to the Jewish people. If it probably happened to some other people they would have had more interest in it. Because of the Jewish people and in general the Jewish people are not liked too much in all the countries that there's a big anti-Semitism, I mean reoccurring more and more so they don't care. They care less. People from other religions don't take it too seriously. They just, the Jewish people always suffered and maybe they are not suffering as much right now, which most of the other religions like to see the Jewish people suffering. This is as simple as that.

INT: So you don't think there's been any change in the view of Jews from the non-Jewish population?

SOL: I think it's about the same as it was before. The only thing is that in the United States you are free and you can live free and nobody has the right to tell you something like they used to say in Europe which hindered you from normal lifestyle because you are Jewish. Here, you still have that freedom which you can fight it in court or, or for your rights. And your rights are here equal to everybody and this is the one good thing in the United States.

INT: How do you account for the tremendous interest in seeing "Schindler's List" or the American people that are going to the Holocaust Museum in Washington?

SOL: I don't think that all the people saw it and people who did see it naturally some of the people were overwhelmed with the scenes they saw, and how people suffered and how the Germans were behaving during the war. And people who are really anti-Semites, they are just looking at it from a different point of view and a lot of them say it's not true. A matter of fact that they didn't show everything really, the horrors which occurred. They couldn't even show it because it was really already drastic and the people wouldn't even go for it if it would be more shown as more horror which it really took place.

INT: What have been your happiest moments since the war years?

SOL: It's normal life. Our life is quite sometimes happy and we have a lot of joy from our grandchildren and family and enjoying life. But there are certain sad things in our life, too, which from time to time occur and we live with it. But in general our grandchildren is about our greatest joy. We especially after the Holocaust we put in a lot of weight and a lot of attention to our children because we didn't have what we could give the children. That's why we are giving the children everything before we are giving it to ourselves. So the love for children is probably greater in our minds than normal people who didn't went through the Holocaust, because we know and we saw what happened to our children in our, basically to the Jewish children.

INT: What have been your most difficult moments since the war? Are there one or two instances that stand out in your mind and your life since the war that have been extremely difficult?

SOL: We missed mostly for instance for myself I missed my parents. I, we don't have anyone who really is close to us. My closest family is my cousin. And parents are needed when we came over here especially. Right now at my age we wouldn't have any parents anyway. But we did miss them over here in the beginning when we came over, and nobody just to watch our child or whatever. We didn't have anybody from our own family who was close. And we especially were very close to our parents and we missed them the most. This was about the most sad aspect from our beginning over here and the life through.

INT: So what helped you cope with that?

SOL: I would say because we had a child, and we put in all the weight and all the attention to our child as he went through college and everything, it helped. We never let our attention for a moment off, because we had only one single son. And a matter of fact he was very close to us too. And we taught him a way that he never missed a day of calling us even from college or wherever he was. Everyday he keeps calling and this is our basic security and closeness.

INT: When you say you taught him, what did you do to get him to feel this closeness?

SOL: No, we just explained to him that it is important to us that you call and don't forget. Either if you are in certain, call collect, don't worry about ways of difficulties to call because you can always find a way to call. And a matter of fact he did always call and still calling. And he probably he took it more seriously than some other children, I think. And 'cause I know here families, mother and son and they are not in contact for a month for sometimes or even years. And we thanks G-d to have our close relations, and he keeps calling and is in touch all the time.

INT: Now when you said this mother and son, is this a family of a survivor?

SOL: An American. No, no survivor family. I, I feel that the survivor families for some reason are very close. There are exceptions but in general they are much closer than the normal American families here. I mean the basic American, basic Holocaust survivor families.

INT: What do you attribute that to?

SOL: As in my case the importance because when you not having any parents, and not having any close family, and the children were the only base for the family structure. And that's why most of the children are from the Holocaust survivors are well educated. And for some reason they placed themselves into a comfortable existence, because maybe of the attention by the parents and help which they received from their parents during as they grow up. And I think it's a big tribute to the closeness what we enjoyed. Right.

INT: Do you ever have dreams about the war years?

SOL: Yes, quite a bit. Not now anymore, as much as in the beginning. We always had dreams and (pause) and the worries and everything. It really never, never disappeared from our life. We always remember. Any uniform, German uniform I see on the television or something, all those things come back. And we try not to take it seriously but we do dream. I especially dream a lot. I think that it's also connected with my medicines what I'm taking. And certain medicines are creating some depression, and those are the depression which occurs in your dreams and everything else. So it's, I don't think it interferes with my normal life, but we do dream and then we do think about it and we do pay attention to it more or less.

INT: So when you say you pay attention to it, what do you mean?

SOL: It means that when those dreams really come through, we are always afraid in our minds that something may happen to our children the same thing as it happened to us. And that's why

we are sensitive to those occurrences which happen over here in the United States, and hearing what's happening in Europe again. So it is worrisome for us, and we probably take it more seriously as other people are.

INT: When you go to survivor, the Holocaust Survivors' Group or meet with friends who are survivors, do you ever discuss your dreams or the fact that you all have dreams?

SOL: No, I feel that they all have about the same situations and as we meet together we have a certain sense of belonging. We feel comfortable seeing those people over there and quite a few are not here anymore. And every time I get there I see those people getting really old and different than it was when we came here. And it's depressing to, seeing all those people dying out and closing out the whole chapter. And not too many second generation people are involved in that organization. Some of them are and they are very seriously engaged in it but you don't see too many of them.

INT: Does that worry you that there aren't more?

SOL: I don't know why. My son for instance, he never went to that, to those occasions, tries to stay away from it, I believe, I don't know, for some reason and I'm not pushing the issue. And some in Philadelphia, basically, some are older people, the children come to those occasions and they are active, which it's nice for us to see that they come. But you don't have a big percentage of those people who, who are active.

INT: What is your concern that there aren't more people that are coming from the second generation?

SOL: It's not the concern. It just in my mind it will just probably in another twenty or thirty years when we are gone, it will probably be forgotten and it will not, (pause) I don't know if that organization will survive with the second generation. They will have to call it a different name and unless there are going to be more people joining that organization and keep it alive after that. But as far as I can see right now it's, it's fading out. All the whole Holocaust survivors and the whole issue is fading out to a point where it probably will be forgotten later on unless they will really teach in schools and have certain history which will take. But the Jewish history, and all of our countries over here are not too welcome and not too accepted.

INT: What are the main things that you would like remembered?

SOL: My main reason to remember is first, I am angry and sometimes very depressed that Germany is surviving and Germany is trying to get out of it. A matter of fact they are still paying restitution to the living survivors, but as a whole the Germans were not punished at all, and they are not punished now, and they growing very strong and the only country really tried to get back to the Germans was Soviet Union because they were suffering a lot. But on account of the Americans, the Americans were just the opposite and the Americans gave them the opportunities to survive, and grow, and prosper from the beginning with the Marshall Plan and everything. The Americans built the Germans up and they are as ignorant as they used to be

years ago, which worries me. And I can't stand it because I thought if I survive that the Germans are going to be our servants forever for the things they really did. And what happened, because of the American politics and American closeness to Germany, because they were the against Russia, they gave them all the opportunities to survive. And now we have a matter of fact the Nazi, the rightist are coming back to life in Germany. And I don't know, I hope it won't go too far.

INT: How do you channel your anger? Do you take--

SOL: No it's, it's an inside depression always. It is a lot of our people just live with that depression. They are depressed people and as much as we live normally, and as much as we laugh and enjoy ourselves, it's still a sense of depression which goes with it and I don't think it will ever disappear. I am very depressed most of the time and I don't know if it's the medicines I'm taking. Some doctors say the medicines which I'm taking create some depression. But there is quite a bit of it and it interferes with the normal life, that depression. I don't know if that affects all of our people. I never mentioned to anybody, but I talked to a lot of all the survivors and they tell me that they are, there is a depression in it. And I don't know if it comes from really from the medicines we are taking for heart and all the depressants and, which are also contributing to that depression, I guess.

INT: When you say a depression, can you explain that for me a little bit? I mean I don't know if you're saying it's like a feeling that's there or an attitude that affects your behavior?

SOL: Every time I can see on the news that Israel is hurting or they are anti-Israel people who open their mouth and they are anti-Israel, or on the news you can see the Neo-Nazis rising in Germany, this automatically goes to me like a punch and I feel depressed right after it. Just any news, any occurrence which is against the Jewish people I take it maybe more seriously than some other take it. And this is part of the depression, part of the way I am taking it, I don't know. My wife is also very sensitive to all the occurrences which happened to either in Israel, or over here, or in Europe or even the United States. It hurts.

INT: Thank you. I think I understand a little better. Is this something that you and A.S. discuss when you see these things on the news?

SOL: No, I really don't discuss but as soon as I see it on television I can realize that A.S. has about the same feelings as I have. We don't really talk about it too much, but some shows you could see that some Neo-Nazis are sitting down, and then people over here are just listening to them and see, hear it's just a show, or it's a Larry King, or it's somebody else. And it's a show to the American people, they get paid for it, but for me and for A.S. or for other people it's just another more or less the torture. It's just those people shouldn't be exposed, and shouldn't be allowed to praise their organization and their well-being and that they feel that are right and this is what should be taking place now. And they are getting stronger and every time something happens it just really hurts.

INT: Is this something that you have ever discussed with Jeff about the security of Israel or the future of people remembering the Holocaust, the lessons?

SOL: No, Jeff by himself and even the grandchildren, they are very Jewish minded and naturally they can hear or they can see like Louis Farrakhan starts to talk, and his attitudes and everything. He knows and he takes seriously. He takes it more seriously than the average American probably who lives over here. But it, he, he is aware of it and he is maybe more attentive to it as the average, probably American people. He pays attention, one thing I know, and I don't really discuss with him, I never did and I try to stay out of it but he is sometimes mentioned himself those occurrences, how they, how the reaction should be but there is no reaction to it over here. Everybody is free to speak out his mind. Maybe this is good for democracy, but it's not good for my nerves.

INT: Oh boy. Looking back over the past 45 years or so, how do you feel about your life, how your life has been, and your marriage and the family?

SOL: It's positive. It was very nice, and in general I am successful and I feel that I accomplished a lot of things over here which probably I wouldn't be able to do it in Europe. On the other hand our young lives were cut off. We never had the young, we never grew up right in the families during our young age and now we are more or less comfortable but just to be thankful, more or less, for the things for the opportunities which you have in the United States. And still I say this country, if you really put your mind to work, and get up early in the morning, and work late you will accumulate enough of money or whatever needed to have a comfortable life at the later age, whatever. To, it wasn't normal in Europe, but over here it's still the opportunity. Even now it's still here. People work, and be attentive, and safe, you can still be comfortable at your retirement and that's what we are.

INT: Every family faces difficulties or challenges, is there you know, developing. How did you and A.S. deal with any challenges that you both faced in your family life and raising Jeff and, just you know, getting your marriage off the ground?

SOL: It wasn't easy. In the beginning we were more or less mostly occupied with our hard work in order to make ends meet and we were very occupied with the, with the conditions we had to meet and it wasn't easy. Half of our life mostly over here only the last maybe ten, fifteen years were, I started to live a little bit more comfortable, a little more secure. But up 'til then the fight for make a living and exist was much greater than all the other, all the other I mean (pause) normal life expectations were looked for. It means that our fight for existence was so hard to send some to college, to maintain a house, to maintain this, paying the mortgages, it was a tough time and nothing came easy to us. Everything came very, very hard and certain speculative--

[Tape 9 - End Side 2] [Tape 10 - Begin Side 1]

INT: ...on August 12, 1994.

SOL: That's how her mother went to Auschwitz and went together with her little brother. And I don't know, this was the normal way of all the mothers and how the mothers disappeared together with the children. And I don't know what else we could have done to change the situation, but looking at the situation and ghettos where the ghettos were liquidated, it is possible that one hour of experience and horror wouldn't be described in two days of talking. Because you looked everywhere and you could see ten different horrors what happened, and how it happened, and it just to live through an hour of horror looking at the guards taking children and shooting them, throwing them in the air and shooting them. And then looking on the other side seeing Ukrainian guards pounding with their shovels over the heads of other people and looking back they can see that they, people are digging their own graves and then they put on a machine gun and then shooting. And you had hundreds of different horrors to look at and to live through. One hour of horror sometimes may take a day of describing it.

And those are the things which I don't think ever anybody can live through those things and people feel that maybe it is not true what people are saying. But I'm stressing that point that this should never be forgotten, and we all live with those sights and visions which we had and I always remember. I can remember the faces; I can remember the screams; and I can remember the horrors and somebody would ask me, "How can you describe the Holocaust?" You can describe a minute of horror, and it might take you an hour to describe it and the feelings you went through. And I don't think anybody can describe it. It just that feeling inside which you had and it never gets out of you. And you always live with it and, and the point is that the people who are not affected and they were not affected at all, they just don't care. There is a indifference in people which people are indifferent, they don't care. "As long as it doesn't hurt me what does it matter that they are killing Jews?" That indifference which happened that time in Europe to the Jews and nobody took care. Nobody cared.

INT: Sol, thank you very, very much.

SOL: All right.

INT: Is there anything else that you wanted to say?

SOL: No, I think it's enough.

INT: Okay.

SOL: All right.

[Tape 10 - End Side 1] [End of interview]