Salvator Moshe: Oral History Transcript

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Salvator Moshe

Name: Salvator Moshe (1915 – 1993)

Birth Place: Salonika, Greece

Arrived in Wisconsin: 1949, Milwaukee

Project Name: Oral Histories: Wisconsin Survivors of the Holocaust

Biography:

Salvator Moshe was born in Salonika, Greece, on September 10, 1915. His family traced its roots back to the Spanish Inquisition, when Greece opened its borders to Jewish exiles. Salvator graduated from high school in 1932. He worked in France for four years and returned home in 1936.

The German army occupied Salonika in 1940. Jewish residents lived in relative safety until deportations began early in 1943. Salvator's entire family was transported to Auschwitz, where all but he and his brother-in-law perished.

In August 1943, Salvator and his brother-in-law joined a transport of Greek Jews sent to clear debris from the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto. After laboring for nearly a year, they were force-marched to Dachau, and then to a forced labor camp in a neighboring forest. As the war reached its last days, Nazis transported the prisoners by train for eventual massacre in the Austrian Tirol, but they were liberated en route by the U.S. Army near Seeshaupt, Germany.

Salvator and his brother-in-law ended up in a displaced persons camp at Feldafing, Germany, and soon settled in Weilheim. In 1948, Salvator's brother-in-law immigrated to Israel. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) arranged for Salvator to come to the United States in April 1949. After a short stay in New York, he was sent to Milwaukee where, through efforts of the Jewish Vocational Service, he was hired by the Greenbaum Tannery. For the next 30 years, he was a tannery worker and retired in 1980. Salvator married Milwaukee native Thelma Seiden in March 1950. They raised three children. Salvator died in 1993.

Audio Summary:

Below are the highlights of each tape. It is not a complete list of all topics discussed. Recordings that used only one tape side are marked: (no Side 2)

Tape 1, Side 1

- Salvator's family in Salonika, Greece
- Jewish history in Greece
- Life under Turkish rule

Tape 1, Side 2
- Jewish life in Salonika during his childhood
- Family religious traditions and Zionist organizations
- Anti-Semitism common in Salonika

Tape 2, Side 1
- Salvator's four years in Marseille
- The outbreak of war
- Salvator's return to Salonika to help defend his homeland

Tape 2, Side 2
- Salonika under German occupation, 1940-1943
- Creation of a ghetto
- Deportation to and first impressions of Auschwitz

Tape 3, Side 1
- Salvator's arrival at Auschwitz
- Auschwitz: Labor, beatings, starvation, and suicides
- Salvator learns about crematoria

Tape 3, Side 2
- Labor and black market at Auschwitz
- Why resistance seemed futile
- Transported to forced labor in Warsaw
- Clearing debris in the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto, 1943

Tape 4, Side 1 (no Side 2)
- Clearing debris in the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto, 1943
- Labor and punishments at Warsaw
- Death march to Dachau in the summer of 1944

Tape 5, Side 1
- Life and death at Dachau
- Escape from the death camp train
- Liberation by U.S. soldiers
- Life in refugee camps

Tape 5, Side 2
- Attempts to find family members
- Postwar life in Germany
- Immigration to the U.S. in April 1949
- First jobs in Milwaukee

Tape 6, Side 1
- Marriage and family life
- Acts of kindness
- Prejudice and anti-Semitism in Milwaukee

Tape 6, Side 2
- Milwaukee's Jewish community
- Religion, politics and culture in the U.S.
- Salvator's closing reflections on his experience as a survivor

About the Interview Process:

The interview was conducted by archivist Sara Leuchter three evenings at Salvator's home on November 11, 1980, and January 22 and February 2, 1981. The first and final sessions lasted two hours each. The second session was terminated after 90 minutes at Salvator's request because the conversation was particularly distressing.

Salvator was among the relatively few Greek Jews to survive the Nazi onslaught. He was also one of very few Jews allowed into Warsaw after the destruction of the Ghetto, about which he provides valuable testimony. He spoke openly and honestly about many delicate subjects. Salvator speaks with a thick accent that can be difficult to understand at times.

Audio and Transcript Details:

Interview Dates
- Nov 11, 1980; Jan 22, 1981; Feb 2, 1981

Interview Location
- Moshe home, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Interviewer
- Archivist Sara Leuchter

Original Sound Recording Format
- 6 qty. 60-minute audio cassette tapes

Length of Interviews
- 3 interviews, total approximately 5.5 hours

Transcript Length
- 109 pages

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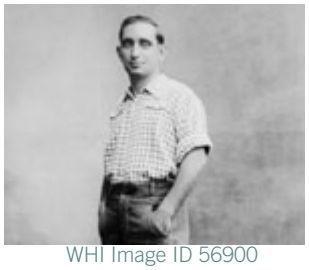
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Transcript

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Key

SL Sara Leuchter, Wisconsin Historical Society archivist
SM Salvator Moshe, Holocaust survivor

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

SL: Mr. Moshe I'd first like you to start out with some of your family background information. The first thing I would like is your name and your date of birth and your place of birth and the names of your parents and if you can remember when they were born and where they were born? So start out with you.

SM: My name is Salvator Moshe. I was born in Salonika, Greece, September 10, 1915. I was the only boy in my family and I had four sisters.

SL: What were your sister's names?

SM: First, there was one that was older. My first Regina, Mary, Elenora and Bella.

SL: Do you remember what years they were born, your sisters?

SM: Not exactly, no. I got to read them. No, I don't remember exactly, no.

SL: What about your parents? Could I have their names?

SM: Sure, my father his name is Israel Moshe. Then my grandfather, Ursure [sounds like: you're sure]. His name was Israel Ursure Moshe. My mother was Isadore [sounds like: Busiloi], before she got married, you know, and her name was [sounds like: Busiloi], And her father was Morticai [sounds like: Busiloi],

SL: Do you remember when either one of your parents were born?

SM: I have some birth… some documents, you know. But not handy, or I can tell you exactly.

SL: Do you know where they were born?

SM: Born in Greece.

SL: In Salonika?

SM: In Salonika, in the household. At the time Greece was in Turkey. My parents were born in regime Turk. When the Jews were ejected from Spain, that's what we are Sephardic Jews, Spain reject the Jews in the inquisition, you know, from the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Turkey opened the doors for the Greeks, and thus we are descent from Spain. Our language Spanish. We don't speak the language Yiddish. That's our language: Ladino Spanish. That's our language we speak, you know.

SL: So as far back as you can remember, your family had come from Greece or in Greece?

SM: Um hum, we were born in Greece. They were born in regime Turk.

SL: Your grandparents?

SM: My grandparents too. Regime Turk.

SL: Did they ever tell you what it was like what it was like to live under the Turkish rule?

SM: They were good. The Turks were good to the Jewish people.

SL: Different than the Greeks were?

SM: It was a bit different.

SL: In what way?

SM: Oh, they cooperate with the Jewish people more than the Greeks. At that time there was no Anti-Semitism it was more, the majority, the business grows by Jewish people. So the large, even on the port when the boats used to came, the workers they were all Jews. And Orthodox, they not work on Saturday, Shabbas they didn't keep. 't exactly Kosher, but they were orthodox. Not Reform, Orthodox. Our temples were Orthodox, men and women don't sit together, they should be separate. Women sit on balcony and men they sit separate on the main floor. [pause in tape]

SL: Do you have any memories of your grandparents? Were any of them still alive when you were young?

SM: When I was young, no. Yes, the mothers, the mother to my father, and the mother to my mothers.

SL: Both grandmothers?

SM: Both grandmothers were alive when I was young. Yes, I do remember.

SL: Do you remember them at all?

SM: Yes. My grandmother on my mother's side, she became old and she was blind before she died. She was blind, you know. And she die in old age. And my father's mother, my grandmother on my father's side, she died of old age.

SL: Were they religious, either one of your grandmothers?

SM: Oh yes, oh, yes, oh, yes. All religious. My mother came from [sounds like: real religious] Espania, her father, Mordecai [sounds like: Busiloi], he was a wise man. He always say, [sounds like: "*Haccom*, *haccom*], [inaudible] exactly but, "I an individual."] He used to wear a special uniform and beards, the black uniform, and long beards.

SL: And what did they do?

SM: They speak , as usually,, they usually go to house to house, once a month, and read to the groups, [inaudible] and any problems in the family, you know, come together and they were real primitive, they were more [inaudible], just to do good for the wealth of the people.

SL: How would a man become a *Haccom*?

SM: Special education. Special education.

SL: A Jewish education?

SM: Yeah. Yes, like *yeshiva*, you know, like. They used to study, and that's the way they became. They were no special schools for these people to be trained.

SL: I didn't know that.

SM: Right.

SL: Why don't you tell me a little bit about your parents? First of all, what was your father's occupation?

SM: Shoemaker.

SL: What kind of memories to you have of him? What was he like? What type of person was he?

SM: My father was a hard working man, devoted to the family. Family is above all. We were more rich and at that time women don't work. He's the one, he support all family, but work long hours and support his family.

SL: What did he look like?

SM: He's a bit taller than me and heavy, I mean husky. You saw the picture, I show you. You saw the picture.

SL: I just wanted the people to know.

SM: Right, you saw the picture that other week.

SL: What about your mother? What are your memories of your mother?

SM: [Long silence]. My mother was a woman strict religion. Even some times some arguments they use to came in the house because my father use to come home a bit late, you know, this man, he couldn't pick up his shoe on time, he stay in store and he had to wait until the customers, and on holiday or Friday and Saturdays, he came home late. That's the argument they use to have, but there was no other way. My father said, the job is first, we have to make a living, that's the -- but otherwise united, respectful of each other, and [pauses]

SL: What did your mother look like?

SM: My mother had blue eyes, nothing like me, you know, blue eyes. And the only one in the family. If I tell you, when I was young, I used to live in a house that my father build, around the, I mean on the same territory was a [sounds like: jami], a *jami* is a Turkish church, like we call a church a temple. Like I say, when I was a child I use to attend services and see how they used to pray. It was a large room, no chairs, every individual had a sheepskin to sit on, and the *hoja*, the *hoja* is the priest, had a special spot where he sit down, and the prayers used to be all like that, "Hallalu" and all this. And the women would were wearing this [sounds like: *harije*], The *harije* is the black veil. They were never let to show their face. And the men, they use to wear the *fez*, this is a hat, a red hat like a box, even the Jewish people would wear this, the older people, used to wear the *fez*, it was a tradition, you know.

SL: Were there a lot of Moslems that live in Salonika?

SM: Yes, there was all Moslems, It was all Moslems. The Turks are Moslems.

SL: So it was more of the Turkish influence, than a Greek Orthodox?

SM: No, no, no, the Greeks came in 1923 when the exchange. The Turks went back, the Turks and the Greeks, there was an exchange in 1923.

SL: Okay, I've got a historical question. But for a long time back, thousands of years ago, wasn't Salonika the area of Salonika, wasn't that Greek to begin with? Or was that always Byzantine?

SM: Byzantine, Byzantine, before Turk it was Byzantine, right.

SL: It was before, so it never really was under Greek control before the '20's.

SM: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Only when they changed. It was a big exchange, between Turkey and Greece.

SL: Now you told me about your sisters, their names anyway. What kind of memories do you have about your sisters? Were you a close family? Did you do a lot together?

SM: We are a close family. Everyone had a trade. My oldest sister, Regina, when she was real young even her feet could reach a sewing machine. She started doing embroidery by machine, not by hand. The Greeks they sew in their homes, the drapes we make here, all the designs were embroidery, and that where that profession start, even when she was in school, after school she learn and her profession is this. My second, Mary, she became a tailor. She work with training with others, women wanting, wanted a [inaudible] Tailors, women tailors used to be, the women never went to the store to buy clothes, they used to buy the material and call one of the tailors, professionals, and engage for a day and you give them the food, the meals, you know, and get paid by the day. And they make the dresses, the dress fit on one. And my youngest, Mary, she is a trainee on this type of job. And then she became a tailor.

SL: Were your other sisters too young then to have a trade.

SM: They were too young, but they worked in some small factories to start working outside of the house. This made an extra few dollars. After the high school, you know. No one went to college, even myself, I never went to college. That's how I finish. High school.

SL: Did your parents have any brothers or sisters living in Salonika? Did you have a lot of cousins in the area?

SM: Sure, a lot of cousins.

SL: Are you close with them?

SM: Very close, very close. Oh, once a week at least, we have a visit from one to another, you know. We were very, very close.

SL: Did you have any relatives or any close friends in the United States before the war?

SM: None, none. [Inaudible] none.

SL: Why don't you describe to me if you can the house that you grew up in, the place that you grew up in.

SM: Where I grew up was a very primitive house. Not too many bedrooms, you know, we used to live, no dining room, or special or, you know. It was a house my father built and there was one large bedroom, the girls, they sleep together, and I sleep outside the dining room as a boy, you know, you can't sleep in the dining room together. But very primitive.

SL: What was it made of?

SM: At that time, you know, it was not a barrack, it was better than a barrack. There was no brick. There was no stone, but some special shingles and, well, a wooden house. You know, just a little primitive. There was no special build.

SL: What did your neighborhood look like?

SM: I, when I was, I had some small memories when I was real young. I use to play even with the Turks. The young Turks. I remember a couple words, I know a few words in Turk, and I use to tell the guy, "I'm gonna take a stone and hit your head." [speaks in Turkish]. The Turks themselves, they use to describe, if you don't know Turk, you don't step in the church, [speaks in Turkish again] That's they

say, the language you are suppose to know. There is another. I don't know how to explain myself. The Turks, they had another tradition, when they use to get a funeral, with a wooden box, and they use to get on shoulders, people, you know, they use to get on shoulders. That was a funeral of the Turks. And it was a special stones, and our cemetery, there was a real, real, real large cemetery, because every individual was [inaudible] with another for large stones, real expensive stones, branded, you know, the name and date of death and the birth dates, but the whole tomb was a stone. The whole body was covered and like a tomb, that's it a tomb. For the Germans came, they destroyed everything, they cleaned the whole thing, they left nothing.

SL: That was a very old cemetery wasn't it?

SM: Real, real ancient cemetery.

SL: Can you remember, as a child did you go through there and look at the dates?

SM: Oh yes, oh, real, real, real, old, real old.

SL: Do you remember at all how old the dates you might have seen?

SM: Centuries, old, real, real old. Real old.

SL: Did you see your family's name on stones that have gone back for centuries?

SM: Oh, yes, Oh yes, ages You can read the names. But the Christians, the non-Jews, when the Greeks came, they build themselves a cemetery, they have a different ways. They have a small cemetery, the bodies stay for three years. After three years, they take the bones and they hang in a bag in the cemetery with a name. And another body goes in the same spot as the other. In the Jewish religion, you are not allowed to destroy the body. That [speaks in Hebrew] is in Hebrew, "this is your place, and that's where they should stay forever. When the Germans came, they clean out everything else.

SL: Were you still in Salonika when the Germans began to destroy the cemetery?

SM: No, no, I was gone then. No, I was gone.

SL: Would you say that you lived in a Jewish neighborhood, were most of them Jewish neighbors?

SM: No, no there was no ghetto. No, No. A few Jewish were there, mixed, all mixed.

SL: How close, well, why don't you tell me, what did Salonika look like? How was it laid out, the streets and the houses?

SM: Salonika on the time of Turks was real ancient, but when the Greeks came, they modernized, instead of building. In 1917 there was a big fire in Salonika, they destroyed, there was made the fire on purpose, just to clean, you know, the old sections, old sections. But after they started building real modern buildings, apartment houses. Salonika itself is in Mediterranean water. It is a beautiful place. They have old ancient homes they modernized, but not exactly. The real part on the front of the port, and the main street, but the modern buildings.

SL: You were right there on the sea?

SM: Sure, yes. A few minutes, there you have the sea there. They was someday, that's where the people, they moved from one spot to another, you know, one country to another, going in the walking.

SL: Walking?

SM: We use to have on the sea, the white tower, this tower was, many years ago, was a jail, was around with water, was sort of like an island. But after, you know, they put ground and there was a ground. Many years ago it was like a, I don't know, there was individual the tower, the white, I got some pictures of it, it was beautiful, the all white tower, it was all white. After, even, I use to be a Boy Scout, we use to have our groups inside the tower.

SL: What did the stores look like? Was there a downtown area and then houses around it?

SM: The stores, the stores, beautiful stores, you know, not a big supermarket, you don't see, I don't know now after the war whether it changed. At that time, there was not a big supermarket, but stores, large stores, and modern, and the Greeks, the majority, they dressed young, you know, they spend more, even the woman or girl, when she goes to work, she dressed like she's rich. In the house, doesn't matter if they were eating even in the darkness, but when they go out, they have to be dressed, because one to the others they talk, "look how she dress, look how she is wearing this." That's how

they were. They living for the others, they don't live for themselves. That's, I don't know, maybe every things changed.

SL: Was there a marketplace? In the middle of town?

SM: Sure, big market.

SL: What?

SM: There was a big market, there was a big market, they called Center Market. Chicken some luxury, and everybody can afford to buy. There was something, any poultry. And meat is larger, but beef a little bit more, is more expensive than the poultry. Poultry just for the rich people. The high class.

SL: Different than it is here then?

SM: Oh, completely different, completely different. And, even meat, because we don't have a kind of a, a big, [inaudible] you know, where the cows can eat and there is nothing, is a stone, it is a mountain, there is no prairies we can grow. But, fish is something, good fish from the Mediterranean, we serve. In sardines, we call this, cheap -- large sardines, and any other type of fish of the ocean, and good quality fish. Shabbas and Jewish family fish was necessary, but the main foods, the main meals, almost every weekly, was like dry beans, or lentils, or peas, this were a meal to serve twice, noon and night, a big part. And meat, I use to be special, because I was funny, fussy eater. My mother, she use to make some small hamburgers for myself, and serve, because I wouldn't eat anything else.

SL: Some small what?

SM: Hamburgers.

SL: Oh, hamburgers, un huh.

SM: Hamburger, small hamburgers, like this, you know, they call [sounds like: kertez].

SL: Almost like meatballs.

SM: Meatballs, like meatballs. They were not large ones. They were like meatballs, exactly right, you know. But bread was the main thing on the meal. Not one slice of bread, you eat half a loaf of bread. Some restaurants in the morning, some special restaurants, that have what they call [sounds like: pacha].

Pacha is in Spanish lake, because the lake they boil, they make soup, and people, a working man, take a big loaf of bread, you know, and dunk in the soup and he's got it all day. Or, is no menu, in some small restaurants there is no menu but if, you know, you be ashamed to tell how much you wanted a meal, you just tell the guy, "I wanna beans" [inaudible] and make a sign with the fingers, you know. The guy he know how much they wanted.

SL: He would make a sign saying, I am sure, rather than saying it out loud?

SM: Signs, I wanta, don't say, he goes he don't say aloud.

SL: Now why wouldn't you say it out loud?

SM: The guy he don't want to say, because he doesn't have much money. Now, in general, some of them then, some are old people, some are workers, didn't have as much money. That's what he can afford to buy. That's what he can afford to eat, before he sit down at table.

SL: I am gonna have to turn the tape over.

SM: Go ahead.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

SL: How big a city was Salonika? How many people were there when you were growing up?

SM: The whole Greece when the time was eight million people, the whole Greece. Salonika, four hundred thousand, that's about.

SL: A very big city!

SM: Yes. Yes.

SL: How many of the, how many of…

SM: Salonika, Athens, and Piraeus—these are the main towns, the most population. And after, Greece is all small towns. For you, the word is town. The majority of the Greeks, non-Jews, who are here, in the United States, are all from small towns, all from small towns. People from Athens, the people there are established, they don't deport themselves [emigrate]. [People would go to America to work and return to Salonika.] But these people -- When I was young, I used to hear, "See this building over there? They call him the Greek from America." He went to America. You know what his profession was? He used to wash dishes. I don't know how many years he worked, and the dollar was worth—when they used to come with so many dollars in Salonika, in Greece. The value, the change of the money was higher and they used to buy themselves buildings. But not the Jewish people. The Jewish people, they never immigrate, they never—because they were united, they were—if a family had so many children, no one take his food out before you're married. After he married or she married, and then he is on his own, but not before. You used to eat in the house. And father was, at the time, it was hard for a father when they used to have all girls, the father used to go [with his head] down, and a father used to have boys, you know, it was like a [benefit] because the girls they used to have a dowry. They have to have to give so many, pounds, English pounds and bring clothes for so many years, so many pairs of shoes, so many this, this, and sometimes the father-in-law at least will give for one year room and board, just to give the girl. And if any girl—beauty don't mean nothing. You don't have the dowry or the money, you stay here. All girl.

SL: How big was the Jewish community in Salonika?

SM: Before we left, a hundred thousand. Close to one hundred thousand, ninety-some thousand.

SL: So Jews were a high percentage of the city's population?

SM: Large, large—90 percent of the Greece [Jewish] population was in Salonika.

SL: Were there Jewish neighborhoods, per se?

SM: I say it was no ghettos, no difference. There was a small ghetto, the one the Germans they used, the last step. They were deported from this ghetto, close to the railroad. But not large ghettoes—small. There was a—very poor families, but most individuals they used to live in good homes.

SL: So the Jews were spread out?

SM: They were spread out, sure, spread out.

SL: I'd like to ask you a little bit about the Jewish life in Salonika. It was very rich and very cultural, as I understand.

SM: Right.

SL: Why don't you tell me, first of all, about the schools. Were there strictly Jewish Schools?

SM: There were some Jewish schools. They used to teach three languages. The main language was the Hebrew [Ladino], French, and Greek. They divided hours, the daily hours, from different teachers, but religion was above all, even after the school, we used to stay in school to make a *Mincha Ma'ariv*[1] service every day. You couldn't go out after the school was dismissed. You had to stay, and make prayers and go home.

SL: Did you attend a Jewish school?

SM: Sure. *Talmud Torah*.[2] It was one of the largest schools. But only Jews, there was no Christians. And we used to have a different teacher, like I say, for every language—the French, Greek, and Hebrew [Ladino].

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[1]Hebrew for the daily afternoon and evening prayers.

[2]A Hebrew school for children.

SL: Did you have to pay money to go to this school?

SM: No, not exactly. As much you can afford. There was no—the special private schools, there was *Lycée Français*. In Salonika there was a school, *Lycée Français*. It was directed by French people. This was private. Not everybody could afford to go there. If your father could afford, send the child to there.

SL: So you went to the school *Talmud Torah*? How many other schools were there, Jewish schools? Were there other Jewish schools besides the *Talmud Torah*?

SM: Not too many, not too many.

SL: How many students were in school with you at that school?

SM: We had eight classes -- close to three, four hundred people.

SL: So then there really were a lot of Jews who were going to Greek schools?

SM: After the start, but not many. High school, no. They started going to *Gymnasium*.[3] *Gymnasium* is after high school. There is no college. The high school by us was eight classes. After the eighth, they used to go in *Gymnasium*. They used to go in the Greeks because we didn't have it. The Jews didn't have it.

SL: Were Jews allowed to go to the eight years in a Greek school or do they have to go to a Jewish school?

SM: No. If you want to [attend the Greek schools], why not? You can go anyplace, sure.

SL: So there were a lot of Jewish kids going to Greek schools?

SM: Not that I know of. Like I said, not a young child. The young children, they used to go to the Jewish schools.

SL: What about any Zionist organizations?

SM: Right, right, Zionist. My father was, not only the founder [long pause] he and a group of men, they form a -- what was the name? I can't remember the name. [long pause] There was a big movement for Israel, meetings, and people they never spoke of Israel -- Palestine, it was Palestine. And by the way in 1923, my father was ready to emigrate to Israel. In 1923.

SL: What changed his mind?

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[3]German for the European academic secondary school.

SM: They didn't change his mind. There was a reason, many reasons. At that time my mother was pregnant, and he economic, you know, he can't afford. And then he try again in 1933. He sold everything. The English mandate, there was a law, if you don't have a 1,000 pounds as a capitalist, you can't immigrate to Israel. And then, my father, after they changed the program, he and I, only, we went to France. Because he had sold everything, we went to France, to Marseilles. Two times my father tried to go to Israel and both.

SL: So he was a very active Zionist?

SM: Right, right.

SL: So did you attend, or were you a member of Zionist organizations?

SM: Yes, yes.

SL: Were there youth Zionist organizations?

SM: Yes, yes, absolutely.

SL: What were their names, do you remember them?

SM: I don't know why I can't remember the names of the organizations now.

SL: Was there a [sounds like: Hashamir or Hadsa-ir]?

SM: No, we don't have a Hashamir.

SL: *Betar?*

SM: I'll let you know when I remember. I get back to that.

SL: Okay. So you were active?

SM: Oh yes, oh yes.

SL: Was that a good part of the social life.

SM: It was a big part. Yeah, yes. And then there was a lot of people even going to *kibbutz* from Greece to Israel. At that time they went to *kibbutz*.

SL: Did you know people who went to Israel before the war?

SM: Sure. I got a cousin, I got a whole family in Israel now. Living. There were two brothers, these two brothers came with me and my father to France, with both we went to France. They didn't like it, they came back, they went back to Greece. My father forcing to go back to Israel. One of them, he was to Israel in 1920s, but both families now are alive, the whole family, they are alive. By my father's forcing them to go. And my father didn't succeed [in emigrating].

SL: Those are also family by the name Moshe?

SM: No, [sounds like: Busiloi]

SL: Oh, on your mother's side.

SM: My mother's side, my mother's side. My mother's side changed their name, it was my mother's sister, can't be [sounds like: Busiloi. Meizer]. My older sister of my mother's. And one of those daughters, this woman, she died now, she's in France, Marseilles. The story I told you, she's in Marseilles They were lucky, they survived.

SL: Take me back to the Jewish life in Salonika, I'll certainly talk to you about Marsailles, but I want to stay on the Jewish track a little bit more. Were there many Jewish newspapers published?

SM: Not too many, no, no, but still they had regular Jewish papers. But in Spanish, none in Yiddish, none in Yiddish.

SL: Yeah, I know.

SM: Non-Yiddish, Ladino, *El Tiempo* and French papers, you know, in French.

SL: Jewish papers published in French?

SM: Yes, because a lot of people spoke in French, that's was the main language, you know, was French and Spanish, by the Jewish people.

SL: Why would French be a major language?

SM: It was international at that time. French was a, it was commercial, in everything.

SL: So the Greeks spoke French also?

SM: No, no.

SL: No, just the Jews who speak French? Why wouldn't the Greeks speak in French?

SM: No interest.

SL: Did the Turks?

SM: No, no.

SL: What kind of interaction did you have with the Turks and the Greeks as a Jewish community? How did the Jews interact with the Christians in the community?

SM: You mean after the Turks left Salonika?

SL: Yeah, well, I'll put it this way. How did the Jews and the Greeks get along together?

SM: Good, good. There was no anti-Semitism until afterwards, they changed everything after—the 1930s, '32, you know, the movement from Hitler started coming and then they started anti-Semitism.

SL: But when you were young, as a child, there was, you could get along well with the Turks before then agreeably?

SM: Right.

SL: What about the Jewish life as far as music and theater, was it an active cultural Jewish life?

SM: Yeah, yes.

SL: You had a…

SM: Theaters and, yeah.

SL: In Ladino theaters? And the music too.

SM: Not in Ladino, in Spanish, right.

SL: Now, as far as you own religious life, in your family, you mentioned before that you were pretty Orthodox. Did you go to Synagogue all the time?

SM: Yes. Saturday and holidays, yes. Some people, you know, they used to go every morning, in the morning prayers. My father went most of the time in the morning.

SL: Did you lay *tefillin*[4] in the morning?

[4]Hebrew for phylacteries, leather cubes containing scriptural texts inscribed on parchment that are worn by males

SM: Sure. You can't go without *tefillin*.

SL: Did you keep kosher in the home?

SM: No, lately, no. You couldn't afford to buy, you know—it was too expensive.

SL: To buy the kosher meat?

SM: To buy the kosher meat.

SL: Did you go to a [sounds like: krager]? Or a Jewish [inaudible]

SM: *Talmud Torah*, that's what I told you last week.

SL: But that was also your regular school?

SM: Right.

SL: You didn't go to a special school after school?

SM: No, no, no.

SL: Were any members of your family nonreligious?

SM: No. At that time, if one member of the family is marrying a non-Jew, the fathers were all [sounds like: fannia] —they considered like the [intermarried person] is dead. It was something completely unusual—to marry a Christian, or -- was completely out.

SL: Were there younger Jews who were becoming more liberal?

SM: Not in my time. Afterwards, yes, but not in my time.

SL: Now, we talked a little bit about your education, you did go to the *Talmud Torah* and you went for eight years, through your graduation.

SM: Right.

SL: Would you say then, when you were growing up that most of your friends were Jewish?

SM: Yes, besides the school, I use to belong to the Boy Scouts, and we used to have a group, several Boy Scout Jewish people, Jewish boys, alone, several.

SL: What type of activities did you do in the Boy Scouts?

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after their bar mitzvah.

SM: In the Boy Scouts? Oh, sports, any -- like here, Boy Scouts, you know, Boy Scouts, Scouts is all over the world the same. That's why we're Boy Scouts, they work, they grew from Cub Scouts. Cub Scouts, oh, a lot of fun. I use to give to them a piece of leather. [inaudible]

SL: They came to visit you?

SM: They came to visit the all the time, the den mothers and the master scout came.

SL: Did you have a lot of activity revolving around the school? Was it an active place? You mentioned you stayed there for services.

SM: Right.

SL: What about the Jewish group? Sports?

SM: No, not too much, not all the time, yeah, we played soccer, a group of boys, but no. I liked sports. We used to belong to a group, soccer was a main sport. [inaudible] soccer.

SL: Do you recall any anti-Semitism that happened when you were growing up?

SM: Yes, yes.

SL: What type of….?

SM: There was an organization they called "Three E's," "Three Epsilons." They started organize against the Jews and go against the Jewish people. We have, in the 1930s, there was an incident. My father began an argument with some Greek guy, you know, and this man, he used to control the lights for the building. My father used to work late hours because there was no regulation, you can stay as many hours as you want, so at midnight he was still — and this man, just to make fun, he used to turn the lights [out] on my father, and my father got in an argument with this man. And I interfered. And I interfered—I was very young, I was a real, you know [sounds like: baggash], between some Greeks, and we went out and we fought and other Greeks interfered and they do some damage to eyes [of] my father, the punching, and punching, and punching. But this was after 1930, '32, '33. The whole atmosphere from Germany started coming, the propaganda against the Jews, but not before. I recall not. We were in peace. And you know, a Greek, when he want to insult to a Jew,

"*Evreos*." "*Evreos*" is like "Jew," but the pure word in Greek to say "Israelis," like you came from Israel. These are the ones they dislike, even, the majority —the ignorants, not the cultivated people, not the business people, because they used to have connections with the Jewish people. They couldn't afford to do this. But after [Hitler's rise], it started growing and growing.

SL: I will also get back to that, I have another couple of questions first. Did you identify yourself as a Greek, or as a Jew, or as a Greek Jew, or both? What did you feel about your own identity?

SM: Where?

SL: When you were growing up there.

SM: Even when I was in Germany after the war, I used to handle the German people doing business, and I used to tell [them], "I'm a Jew. You want to deal with me? I am a Jew." Here, when I meet a Greek, the first thing that he ask me, which church I go. If he is a [inaudible] man, I tell him, "I am not a Christian, I am a Jew." But if not, I am telling him this church or this church, because some of them, they don't know how you can be a Greek and you can be a Jew. I told you the story when I came here, remember?

SL: Yes, why don't you tell me, can you tell it again for the tape?

SM: Sure. Exactly, or in connection with what you ask me. When I came to this country, I used to eat in a Greek restaurant because I don't like the Jewish foods, the reason because they put garlic, and I went to a Greek restaurant to eat. And I met a Greek fellow, he says, "you looking for a job?" "Yes." "Come on, I am taking you where I am working, in a deli." It was the Greenbaum Tannery, in town. We went there, went to the front office, the guy says, "no work. You don't speak English, you know. We have nothing open for you." I went back to the Jewish Vocation Service and I told the story. "I went for a job, they refused me because I don't speak English." "Where did you go?" "Greenbaum Tannery." The man he won't say anything. He sit down to his typewriter, he write and he write and then he says, "You go by Mr. Greenbaum and you tell." I went, the secretary was there, said he's not here, wait. An hour, he came. The first thing he asked me, "What you speak?" This language or this, or this? And he

heard Greek, oh, he says, "call Chris, Chris [inaudible]." The other man, he talk to me, I got a job there. $1.00. Now, he saw the letter from the Jewish Vocation Service on the desk. He asked me, "You speak better Greek than I do," and "what's the connection [between] this letter and you from the Jewish Vocation Service?" I ask him how much education he has, he told me "I finished college here." We talking good now, both are talking Greek. I ask him if he knows the difference between nationality and religion. No answer. I say, "I am Greek, but I am Jewish religion." And this man, he didn't know what to say. "I was born in this country, my father came from the old country, well nobody told me there was a Greek and a Jew." Now this man is a salesman for the [inaudible] here on Capital [Drive, in Milwaukee]. After so many years, the man, he excuse himself for his ignorance, and he think, you know, I open his mind and explain that a Jew can be any nationality, not only Greek, can be any nationality.

SL: Are you still friendly with him?

SM: Sure. My son went, when he was during school, in high school, freshman school year. And they know the story. [inaudible] But, when I had the job, it was different then, and I pronounced myself as a Greek, not Jew, we are Greek, fine. But when the holidays came, I take it off, on Jewish holidays, "He's not a Greek, he's a Jew." That's the first thing they tell you. "He's not a Greek, he's a Jew." And most places where I work, there was no Jewish people, and I am distinguish, I take a holiday, a Jewish holiday, it don't bother me.

SL: I am going to have to turn the tape over.

SM: Thank you.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2

TAPE 2, SIDE 1

SL: I have one more question about the identity situation. You did learn how to speak Greek then because you were living in Greece, right?

SM: Yes.

SL: Did you, the Turks were in there first, so did you speak Turkish?

SM: A couple of words, no. Not much.

SL: The Greeks came in pretty soon.

SM: Right, that was, I was too young. How old was I, 5-6 years old, and I couldn't get much.

SL: So you spoke Greek in the city, and you did speak Ladino in the home?

SM: Home.

SL: Any other languages?

SM: Between France, between France, we spoke Ladino. If I meet you as a Jew, you know, I never spoke to you in Greek. I spoke to you in Ladino. When we came together, when we came together, you know, the Jewish people, that we spoke, but outside in community, it was Greek.

SL: And did you speak French also?

SM: Yes, yes. I spoke French from school, but when I went to France, you know, my vocabulary became larger.

SL: Well, let talk about your move to Marseilles? When did you go and why did you move?

SM: When I told you in 1933 when we went, ready to go to Israel, and the plans were out, we decided to go to France. I have an uncle in France, and other cousins. My father-in-law, and his two brothers. That was in September 1934, 33-34, 1934. They took all, their financing were much better than my father's. They stay one week, they didn't like it, both went back. My father's telling me, if they went back, then what are we gonna do here? I say, I am not going back to Greece. You want to go, go. I was 17 years old at the time, you know, I was 17 years old. And we went to France, the Counsel, at that time, the first thing they put on the passport, I am going to tell you in French, and then I am going

to explain to you. [speaks in French]. “I declare I am going to France not to occupy a worker’s job.” You are going to visiting, you know, or you are a capitalist, if you want to open a business, you can, but not to be a worker. That was the big first sentence in the passport. No, father start discouraged and so, and he never left Italia. Never left the house all the time, and the family was mine. So father, you go, I am going back without you, I am not going with you, no, you go by yourself. My father went [home to Greece]. I spoke the language, I told you, and sometimes started making friends, and friends and they took me to the market, there was a big market, an everything market. And I got no papers, I got nothing. They give me merchandise to sell, on commission, I did not sell, I give back. They start without me. I went and I like it, and I make money. I use to make good money. If any policeman or police came, the people who wish to have my merchandise, they say that’s mine, and I use to leave. One morning, a Frenchman came 8 o’clock in the morning. We use to do 4 o’clock in the morning to get one spot. Man says to me, [speaks in French], do you know what that means? "Get up, I want this spot." The man next to me was an Algerian -- Jewish, too. You know what he told him? "This young fella is here since 4 o’clock in the morning. You came here like you were going to the bank, and you want just him open the door for the bank, you want [him] to just give out." The Algerians, they use to have knives on the back of neck. That’s what he did the guy. "Just go." The guy took his suitcase, he disappears.

I start going everyday to the market, different markets. The big market was Sunday. We use to go to Marche des [sounds like: Pierce], the [inaudible] market. They sold like Maxwell Street in New York, I mean Chicago. Everything. Then I start taking shirts, undershirts, and sell. You have to talk loud, you have to, you know, the merchandise, if you say chemises for [inaudible] loud to the people, to bring the people close. By noon, I use to make a good profit. And then I start sending money back to Greece, the other way. At that time one franc equaled seven times more value in Greece. Then I wrote a letter, "I won’t be back, I’m gonna stay." Now my mother’s wailing, because my father told, with no papers, maybe he’s gonna get caught, put in jail. My passport was expired in six months. I went back

to Greece, I took a new visa. Money, don't mean nothing. I had to pay my fare and everything because I had, when I came back from France by myself. My father came back, too. My father, he gonna stay a year, he gonna stay less. He gonna stay without me, he gonna stay without a family. He came back, he didn't stay long again. He left. I stay there, two years I stayed. In between the time that I was there, my cousin, the one, they live now in France, in 1920, when he was young, he went from Greece from Salonika to France as *legionnaire*. You know what a *legionnaire* is? At that time, when you sign, it was five years *engagee*, you enroll, you have to sign for five years. After that five years, you have nothing. They give you a suit from [inaudible], you know, and you are a civilian, you are nothing. But this cousin of mine was one of the smartest. He applied to be a naturalized French. That's 1920's, I'm talking about. And now I'm talking '35, 1935, they say. When I was in France, he wrote me a letter, "Salvator, try to inform [?] yourself -- I was in this regiment, I applied to become a French citizen, this and this and this and this. Inform if anything happens, anything develops." I had some people, they did the job for me. From France, they wrote direct to the Consulate, the French Consulte in Salonika. They [the Consulate] call me, "Are you this man?" "Yes, sir." "Are you married?" "Yes." "Do you have children?" "Yes." "Do you want to go to France?" "Yes." "One condition: you going from Greece, you going with a Greek passport." To get a Greek passport, they give you a visa, you know, you went to France. I am gonna need another passport, a French passport. As soon as you pass the Greek water, take the Greek passport, throw it down in the water, the ocean. You go into France, you are a French citizen. They did this, you know, not to have any obstacle between the Greek government and the French government.

Again, I use to have a small home on my own. It was real hard to get a private home. Most people live in hotels, for years and years. This was a private home, real small, but private. I pay for the key, entrance, you pay so much, and I got an apartment. The other tenant, they had two kids, a boy and a girl, real young, young kids, 4-5 years old. The boy was older than the girl, you know. And I use to live with them, I use to do that. And I lived over a year, room and board I use to pay them.

Now I apply to go on the French Army when I was there. They refuse me, they say, "If you want to go the Legion Etrangeres [Foreign Legion] you can go, if you are not a criminal. I ask, "If I am going, take me, I got my place, I go back to Greece" I say but I not enroll in the French [Foreign] Legion. Now they interview me. I decide to go back to Greece because, my, if I don't present myself in, you know, my time, I will be a deserter. I be on both sides illegal. I decided to go. By that time, til I decide to go, three times the security catch me. On the street one day, the policemen, the French policemen, they go two together. I was walking in the market, one of them says, real friendly, they were real friendly. "Hello, fella, how are you?" Talking this, talking that. "Let me see your papers," the person asked, "let me see your papers." I say, "Oh I changed my pants and I left my papers in my other pants." They look at each other. So they ask me, "How you speak so good French," you know? Say, "My country, you know, French is the popular language to speak." No reply. They stop me a second and they told me, "If we want to do our duty, we have to take you to the police station, but don't let you, we catch you once more, that's where you gonna go." "Oh, yeah," I say, "I got my papers." Well, the second time they took me as security, they catch me. And the first thing they do is just like a criminal -- fingerprints, pictures, this, this, and they give you two days, you know, to leave the country. What I use to do, I changed the domicile, I changed a different address, not to, you know, to get caught. While I was there, I picked a man, who is security in the division, and one day I meet him in the street. I asked him if I can talk to him. He looked at me. "I know you are from security," I say. "Why you have the courage to talk to me?" "I like to ask some questions, sir." We went in a bar and I told him my situation. I say, "I'd like to stay in France, however he can help me, the naturalization papers. He says, "It is real hard. First, I ask you again, how you have the courage just to tell me, because I have to put you in jail. Well, I am going to give another advice because I like you. Change the domicile," he told me. "Change, this way, you know, you be disappeared from that." But I couldn't stay. I couldn't do this. Three times I did this. This one and two others.

SL: So when did you finally go back to Greece?

SM: We went, it is too long, you know. The first time it was two weeks, the second time was a month, he went back on his own.

SL: But when did you go back?

SM: When? In 1935.

SL: You were there for?

SM: Two years. First '35-36. I was there close to two years. Close to two years. And I went back, the service, the military service, it's two years in Greece, but when you are, for me no brothers, for me no brothers, is when you are the first of the family and your father has five kids, you serve five months only, and I went to the Greek Army and I served five months.

SL: During peace time?

SM: Peace time. There was no war, just regular army, just regular military, you know. But the only because I was from a large family, they give you a chance to serve less time to help with your family. And I went back to Greece.

SL: So.

SM: In old pictures, I show you. The pictures show you my family. Everything I have, from France, because I have nothing left from home.

SL: In those years in the late '30's, middle and late 1930's, what kind of news were you getting about the European situation? The change in governments in Europe?

SM: The European situation?

SL: Yeah, the rise of Hitler in Germany and were you aware of that?

SM: Sure, sure we knew what was going on, yes.

SL: How did you find those things out?

SM: The newspapers would show, the news while we were there. And the movement that, like I said before, these organizations that [inaudible] you know. There were a movement [inaudible]. And they

start going bombing and doing damages on the Jewish homes and this and this. This stuff. That's how it start.

SL: Did people -- were you aware that Hitler was threatening Jews?

SM: Sure we knew. Sure we knew. I knew even before I came to the camp, you know, I knew what was going on, yeah. Even an officer, he give me the full description when the, where we go, what we expect, and everything, and I couldn't believe it. An officer, a Greek officer, I fought with him in the war, in Albania. You know, this is a different story. Mussolini declare the war to Greece in 1940. 1940. And we fought in Albania. Albania was mountainous, from Greece. Before he declare the war to Greece, he took Abyssinia. And then, before declare the war, he was in Greek territory, but the Greek army push him back. We were six months on the front, fought with the Italian people. At that time, he [the Greek officer previously mentioned] turns to me, they were Aryans and this the Greek army was not -- Mussolini made a speech before he's declare the war to Greece. I have eight million bayonets, eight million [sounds like: carbiniere] was the [inaudible] against Greece. We were a small country in Italy, but we hold the front. We hold the front.

SL: Going back to the rise of Hitler in Europe, did anti-Semitism get increasingly worse in Greece?

SM: Yes. Yes, worse and worse.

SL: Did you, do you ever fear that you would be threatened directly?

SM: No fear, no fear. I had only, if, I was a single man, I was not in touch with my family, I was going to the mountains as a partisan, to fight against Hitler, but you know what my mother told me? If we leave the house, myself and your father, you know, we don't think twice, we are not surviving, you don't want to be the guide for your sisters, where you gonna go? And that's again, like the [speaks French], the French says, "you follow the crowd." The Jews, we went to camp, just because we were reunited, and there is another large , large story I have to tell you. The Rabbi, the Rabbi from the city of Salonika, encouraged the people, the Germans forced him to preach to the people, where they go, and all liars. The young people started to get married, they gonna be united, they gonna work together, and this

and this and this, and everything was *mise-en-scene*. You know what *mise-en-scene* is? Is like a movie on a screen, that's what the Germans, they took the Rabbi and they told him, if you want to serve, otherwise we kill you, you know. You tell your people that's what they expect. And that's what they preached in the temples, this and this and this. And I knew everything was lies, everything was not a reality.

SL: What do you recall about the first of September 1939, when World War II broke out in Europe, do you remember that day?

SM: Sure.

SL: What do you remember about it?

SM: Sure, when Germany attack first Poland, that's where there was, at Danzig. That's where there was the first attack. The Polish people, the Polish people, you know, we were aware, we knew what was going on

SL: You got the news of that?

SM: Sure, we got the news. But they couldn't resist, against the Germans.

SL: What was life like in Salonika until Italy attacked? Was it just the way it normally was before you fought against Italy? Italy didn't attack Greece until 1940.

SM: 1940.

SL: So life until 1940?

SM: It was going normal, was going normal, was going normal.

SL: What kind of work were you doing at that time?

SM: I was working with my father, shoemakers.

SL: Living at home?

SM: Always at home. Sure, I wasn't married, I was a single man, like I said before, you couldn't leave the house without being married. It is your home. In 1939 my sisters got married. The older sisters, I never mentioned to you, I did last time, I have a brother-in-law, the only survivor. Regina's husband.

SL: What's his name?

SM: Regina.

SL: What's his name?

SM: Maurice Moshe, he's got the same name.

SL: Same name?

SM: Yeah, he's got the same name. Back then he's got the same name. They were married in 1939 before the war, and when they came to camp, my sister came to camp, she came to camp, she brought a child a month old. She was born a month before our ghetto, and my mother named her Esther. Esther, from the Bible. How she asked to be the miracle to the Jewish people, and my mother thought, you know, you can name her Esther, and the miracle appear to the Jewish people of the time. A month old, she was. My brother-in-law was in the army. In school we were together. In the army, together. In camp, together. Delivered, together. The only [time] we were separate, he went to Israel, and I came here to the States. He's got one higher number than I have, 116520, 116521 his number is. He changed name, they call him, they used to call him Moshe Moshe. They say Moshe Moshe, he changed to Maurice Moshe, and he is the president of the Greek survivors from [sounds like: the area] They got a big community in Israel. The Moshe [inaudible]. I don't know if you heard, Haifa, the port of Haifa, after Israel became a state, the first Jews was the Greek Jews, because those times there was no machinery, everything was manual, these were specialists, they used to carry 200 pounds on their shoulders, and take the steps from the boat like you walk on the, you know. You never heard from this, the Jewish -- ? They are the pioneers of the Port of Haifa, the Greek Jews.

SL: Now you fought in the army from October of 1940 until '41.

SM: '41.

SL: When you returned to Salonika in '41, had the Germans come in yet?

SM: Let me think, that's a good question.

SL: So, tell me the story.

SM: The army start to dissolve, the Greek army, after the Germans occupy, you know, Salonika. The army is dissolved.

SL: Wait, I want to clarify something with you. You were fighting again the Italians….

SM: Italy.

SL: And you managed to hold them off.

SM: Right.

SL: Meanwhile the Germans came in.

SM: Meanwhile the Germans came because, you know, they see the Italian people are not doing nothing, and the Germans advanced, and a lot of people in Greece. There was a line, like in France, a line with Maginot, and in Greece was line of Metaxis. Used to go, a lot of people [to defend against the Germans there].

SL: I want you to tell me that story about the Germans, but I am going to have to turn the tape over.

SM: Okay.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2

TAPE 2, SIDE 2

SL: You want to tell me the story.

SM: The war between Italy and Greece. They were in Albania, like I said before, Albania's mountains. The mountains were the real, real poor people, a village where even the women themselves, you know, they had nothing to eat. You couldn't get nothing from a peasant—only if you had a little salt, you could get a piece of bread. We fought, we held the front. A lot of boys went back with feet frozen, frozen feet. They used to take to the hospital, before they take the boot [off], the feet [and the boots] came together, frozen, like a piece of rubber. We lost a lot of boys. I was in the first ones. We lost -- Every day we had blood on us. Even Mussolini, in March, 1941, Mussolini came on the front, to hold the front, because the Italian people—we used to catch prisoners, you know. The Italians [would say], "*Buon Greco, buon Greco*."[5] They didn't want to fight, they were nice boys. They brought [with] them on the front guitars, mandolins. They thought they were going to a party. We used to catch prisoners, and I used to interpret for them. They said, "We don't want to fight. Mussolini is *dura testa*.[6] He is the one." At that time, Italy was in two different parties, Badoglio[7] and Mussolini, different troops. Both sides, we had lost. Now, when we -- All on the front, like I say, food was not common. There were not roads. There was a real narrow—only a mule can go, and the mules at the time, they used to come to the destination, they used to die—starvation. The boys used to start eating the only thing they could find with the peasants, the dry corn, real dry corn. They used to dance like chickens and they used to bleed internally. I try, say no, better hungry. [pause in tape]

The war was going on. One day we heard Germany occupied Salonika, and everybody disappeared. They started trying to get away on their own. Now you are in the mountains. We used to meet a peasant, an Albanian, "How long it take from this town to this town." The guy used to tell me, "Two

[5]Italian for good Greek.

[6]Italian for hardheaded.

[7]Marshal Pietro Badoglio was an Italian leader who succeeded Mussolini after he was deposed on July 25, 1943, and surrendered to the Allies.

hours." You have to multiply five times more because he knew his roads, he knew how to go, and you don't know. We used to go different ways. Until the time we came on the service, on the road. I dropped my gun, the only thing I had [was] a blanket. The weather started getting a little bit better. I used to sleep nights outside, I recognize, where the lambs are overnight, and days I used to walk. One day I see a group of Germans in one town, no before that. I went in a small town I passed. It was Shabbas, and I asked, "Where's a temple." I found the temple. At the time I was with the uniform, full of lice. I was full, full of lice. The *shammes*[8] gave me a *tallis*,[9], I wear, the service was over. After the service, I told the *shammes*, "Take the *tallis* and burn it right away because I'm full of lice." "Don't worry, my son, don't let yourself—" Nothing. He was so upset because he saw me—I couldn't see myself. I was completely full of lice. I gave the *tallis* to the man to destroy. I started walking. Another town. Begging for a piece of bread. The farmers don't know [if] you're Jewish or not. In your uniform, you're Greek. [inaudible] One day I see a group of tanks, German tanks. I went to an officer, a German officer, and that day I picked some roses from someplace, some flowers I had in my hand, walking, and a blanket in one hand. I offered the roses to the German officer, and I ask where he is going, to what destination he is going with the tanks. He says, "Salonika." We are speaking French now. I couldn't speak German at the time. "Salonika. You want to go?" "Yeah." He took me on top of the tank, and they left me close to fifty miles away from my town, because there was bridge out. I walked, I am in town. Who I met before I go home? My sister, Regina. She was coming to town. Everybody thought I disappear. I never wrote letters. They had no information from me. The war was over a month, and that's what it took me, over a month, to go, because I used to walk forty miles a day, walking in the day, sleeping in the night. I told my sister, "Don't even come close. I'm going to the Turkish bath"—I knew where it was. I says, "Bring me some clothes [from] home and tell Mother I am here, I am alive. Tell everybody I am alive." I went to the Turkish bath, took off my clothes, and I told

[8]Yiddish/Hebrew for the 'sexton of a synagogue'.

[9]Yiddish/Hebrew for 'prayer shawl'.

the guy to put those on the furnace—burn up. And I went home. I figure out my mother, praying and crying every day because they knew whoever didn't came got killed or disappeared. For a long time I used to sleep on the floor because my body—you couldn't stand to sleep in bed. Because we used to sleep on the stones, whatever there was. And the war was over, but Germany, Germany—the whole town was occupied. Every day, we used to see were the Germans, the victories. They used to occupy this town, this town, from Russia, where they used to go fight with the Russians, the victory. For a year the Germans didn't do nothing to the Jewish people. There was a lull, after the occupation, after a year, and then the stars, the Jewish stars, the Jewish star they gave to us and everything. But before the ghetto, before we had the Jewish stars, they started taking the Jewish people into labor.

SL: Forced labor?

SM: Forced labor. And I declared [that] I know from shoe repair, from shoes, from shoes. There was a Jewish man, he took some order for the Germans to work to make shoes for the officers and they were looking for professional people and I went and I worked with this man. One day -- And they used to pay—you couldn't even afford to buy a piece of bread what they pay was. One day an officer, a German officer came with an interpreter, a Greek was interpreting German. I was the revolutionary there. I used to tell [that] we can't work without food, we can't work with this and this, and I started talking and the German officer came to me, and he starts to put two hands to slap my face. He didn't even touch me. So far came, you know? The man, he had the order from the Germans, he told I am the revolutionary, I am going to revolt the people not to work and all the Germans left, the officer left, and the interpreter [stayed]. I took the guy, I hold him. I was ready to throw [him] out of the window. The other boys, they hold me. I said, "You, you Jew, and you try to tell this because you want to save your life? You want to save it, why you don't see this and this and this? They are children. Why do you think he's going to support you because you took this order and you want to-." They knew I won't stay there. I took a young boy, I was paying on my own, and I put him on my place, on the job I was doing. At the time I use to do large on that business and I used to make good money. And I pay the boy

every week, weekly, and I used to feed him. I used to give food. He used to come and feed him, just to be in my place. Now this was anterior, before anything happened, before the ghetto, before the people started to be deported. Anterior work, that's where it starts.

SL: What work were you doing after you left the shoe business?

SM: I was selling, I was buying, selling, selling and buying. At the time it was like a black market. Speculation. You used to buy this, so much, you sell, make profit. I make large profits.

SL: The first year of Nazi occupation though, did they arrest a lot of prominent Jewish citizens?

SM: Not only Jewish, and Greeks too, and Greeks.

SL: What happened to them?

SM: Some of them got shot, some they get in jail. But everything was secrecy, everything. They don't show. Everything was underground. Not only Jews, anything that happened against, they used to—if you had killed one German, the next day they used to take some people from the street and disappear and shoot them up.

SL: Did they start to close Jewish stores right away?

SM: No, no. When they came, after they came to my father's and they show their watch—"In five minutes take your hat and go out and give me the keys." That was at the end, that was close to the end, before we were deported.

SL: That was when they closed the shop?

SM: Right.

SL: They weren't doing that to people in the very beginning?

SM: Yes, not in the beginning, no, no, no, no. There were no anti-Jewish measures in the beginning?

SM: This is the anti-Jewish—they took the Jewish people for forced labor.

SL: That was it basically? And the killing on the streets?

SM: Right.

SL: When was the ghetto created?

SM: A year after, a year after the occupation, 1942, a year after occupation.

SL: Where in Salonika was the ghetto? What part of the city?

SM: The main ghetto was a few blocks close to the railroad. They were all organized. They used to put the people by the groups. This section comes this time, and with the group, they used to be formed [from] so many families. The trains, off they go. Another group used to go in the same ghetto. [Sounds like: Veronische] that was the name of the ghetto. Ever hear of Veronische?

SL: Yes, I have.

SM: Veronische was the ghetto.

SL: So they didn't squeeze everybody in there at once?

SM: No, no. Systematically, systematically. Everything systematically. Everything was all—no, they didn't squeeze.

SL: Did you know what was happening to those people who were taken to the ghetto?

SM: Yes.

SL: You knew that they would be deported?

SM: Yes. This officer, the Greek officer, one day he told me, "Sal, Sal," he says, "you know where you're going. It doesn't mean you're going to be together. You're going to be separated [from] your family." And he described it to me, not in details, informal: "You go from one room and when you go out, you don't know yourself, how you're going to look after you go out from another room. And men and women, older people, won't survive." It is just like, when I went the first day in camp. I had a big fight with a French boy. The first day I went to camp, I fought with a French boy. We were talking, he says to me, “You see that chimney over there?” “Yes, manufacture.” “No,” he says, “They are burning, 24 hours a day they are burning the people.” I punch him. “How you can tell me this.” The guy, he never punch me back, he said, “I will give you time, you find out by yourself,” and then, we friends, we talking French together, I like you, but I agree the way, you know, you took what I told you, the reaction. Few days after, and I went and I apologized to him. I hug him and I told him, “I’m sorry, I

found out. That's real." The French people were first ones in camp. The Germans were the first in camp, and Germany was occupied, you know, in 1939, the first camp Buchenwald. Buchenwald, that was the first camp what they organize. [slight interruption]

SL: I have a question for you. When the Greek soldier, policeman, told you what to expect, did you believe him?

SM: I couldn't believe it, no. No, I didn't believe him. It was not a soldier, it was an officer. It was an officer. I thought he was a propaganda to take me in the mountains with the partisans.

SL: Now, you didn't mention this to me before. This is new to me. What opportunity did you have with the partisans?

SM: To go in the mountains, and fight against the Germans.

SL: And you didn't go?

SM: No.

SL: Because of your family?

SM: That's right. None from the Jewish people went. The Greeks themselves, they organize and they were non-Jews, it was because, they were attacking even non-Jews, the Germans. They were killing by the mass everyday. And they started going to the mountains, and it was beautiful, upon the town, they use to boycott, they use to do damage against the Germans, and when he told me, the way he put together, I couldn't believe it. And I was discouraged either way, I couldn't go with him. That took me five minutes, what I was, if I want, you know, I go, and I go with them. I said no, I don't go.

SL: How long did people live in the ghetto before deportation?

SM: A week.

SL: A very brief time.

SM: Very brief. Very close, very short. Like I say, they had some policemen—Jewish boys—the Germans, you know, to make the job, the dirty job, they give it to those Jewish boys. They used whips to the Jewish people, the boys. Some of them they went to camp and they took care of the boys. When they

were to camp, they took care right away of these people. They gave boots, for the dirty job. The Germans, they had all systematically planned, how, who's going to do, how, and not to get panic, not to revolt, because they had no time for this. They wanted everything organized, even the deportation. When we went a destination, after so many days by train, and we got off, everything was planned. The women here, the men there, the younger people here, the older people there, an officer, and my father next to me. He wasn't an old man, he was wearing glasses. "We're going to take these people, the older people, by buses. They don't have to walk." And the interpreter was a Greek Jew. If I have this [showing number].

SL: The number?

SM: The first transport that went from Veronische was 109,000. I have some friends in Israel, few of them that survive. Now when we, the younger people, we went on line, march up to camp, on the right, and so was the first day.

SL: Excuse me, I want to interrupt you because I want to be able to get to that, and I am not finished asking you some questions about ghetto before you get to Auschwitz. Was there a Jewish council that was established in Salonika, or a Jewish governing body in Salonika after the German occupation?

SM: In favor of the Germans. The rabbi was chief in command. He was the head. And other people. These people, the Germans, they took and they give their own instructions, what to tell the people, and they promised to them they're going to serve. They're going to send [the council members] someplace, somewhere after everything is all settled. Sure they were. They were organized even for the Jewish people.

SL: Were they in charge of giving you food rations or job orders?

SM: What food, what food? Everybody had food. Food there was no problem. Food was no problem.

SL: What about contact with the Greeks during this period of the German occupation. How did the Greeks react to the German treatment of the Jews?

SM: Some of them were pleased because some of them took the stores from the Jewish people. Some of them took the homes. Some took everything. Said, it's their time. In Hebrew, you know what they say? [speaks in Hebrew][10]—"Don't trust a *goy*,[11] even if he is down on the ground." I had a lot of Greek friends that tried to help me with this or this, but they couldn't do nothing. What you see last night -- did you see *The Diary of Anne Frank*? They didn't do in Greece. In Italy, in Athens, they did—the underground. In Athens, the Italian people, they were more sweetness to the Jewish people. They didn't do as bad as the Germans—because Athens was occupied -- you remember what I told you? -- Italy and Germany were allies, and the Italians occupy Athens and the Germans came to Salonika.

SL: Was there any religious life in the city while the Germans were there? Did they shut down synagogues right away?

SM: They didn't shut us, no. No, everything was going on, no they didn't touch the synagogues. They were busy with other things and they didn't want a show, you know, against.

SL: What about resistance? Was there any planned resistance?

SM: Jews? None.

SL: Why not?

SM: None, like Warsaw in the ghetto, I am going to tell you about the ghetto, because I witness this. I was in Warsaw, I was in Warsaw when the ghetto was completely destroyed. There was big story that, when --

SL: Oh, I'll definitely want to hear that story when we get to it.

SM: Because we were only Greeks, the first people went after the ghetto destroyed, we were the Greeks, and the reason were, because we couldn't speak Polish, so the work was with the Polish civilian people. The job was to clean the bricks and the ruins of the homes that were destroyed. That's what.

SL: So there was no resistance then.

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[10]Tape 2, side 2, 22:25.

[11]Yiddish/Hebrew for 'non-Jew'.

SM: No resistance, absolutely nothing, no, no. Because, like I say, the rabbi was the accomplice of this, everything. I was, people had no other chance, people had no other chance—that's all. They had no other way, where to go, how to go, to fly, even to [sounds like: Pomona]. Some people went, a few people went to Athens, you know, not with a family—you couldn't go.

SL: By and large did most people believe the rabbi?

SM: The majority believed the rabbi. The majority believed that.

SL: What was his name?

SM: The rabbi was not even Greek. It was a Polish rabbi. He came from Poland to our town. I don't even remember [his name], my brother-in-law, he remember. He's got more statistics, you know.

SL: When was it that you were forced to leave Salonika? When were you deported from Salonika?

SM: When? In '43.

SL: Do you remember the month?

SM: Yes, in '43, in April, between March and April.

SL: And what happened? How did they do it?

SM: Like I said before, it was organized. This section of town goes this week—and you had to go. You had to go. And you stayed with the family, together, at the time, from this ghetto, from Veronische, until the time the trains were there and the railroad and all together in one train, like sardines. The time was going and going and going. Nobody even tried to escape from the train.

SL: Did you have any food or water?

SM: Food we had, our own food, our own food. Water was rationed. Even I think I became a leader, to distribute the water from the train. I don't remember the details.

SL: How long did the trip take?

SM: Four days, four or five days. We passed Serbia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and then Poland.

SL: And when the train stopped, where were you?

SM: In Poland, in Auschwitz.

SL: They took you right to Auschwitz?

SM: Direct to Auschwitz. That's where the destination was.

SL: I am going to have to turn the tape.

SM: Very good.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 2

TAPE 3, SIDE 1

SL: The last time that we were together, which was actually a couple of months ago, you had been taken, deported by train from Salonika…

SM: From Salonika.

SL: With your family?

SM: The whole family together.

SL: And you said this was in April of 1943?

SM: Right.

SL: Could you describe to me, if you can remember, what your feelings were, what you saw, when the train stopped and you got out and realized where you were. What happened when you got off the train?

SM: Everybody got off from the train, and then they started selecting, men in one section, women in another section. Older men in a different section. My brother-in-law, the one that's now in Israel, Maurice Moshe, was next me and my father was next to me. An officer, a German officer, everybody was in line, a German officer, he select: "You go there; you stay." And they took away my father. My father was not an old man, was a young man, but he had glasses. What kind of appearance they gave to him, I don't know. And the same to the end of the line. When they organized the younger people on the line, up, walk our destination to Auschwitz in the camp. We left. We didn't see anymore relatives. We didn't see where they went, what they're doing. We don't know nothing.

SL: Just you and your brother-in-law?

SM: My brother-in-law and I, we went to the transport. They were supposed to be *Arbeitslager*.[12] *Arbeitslager* is the young people can work. The younger people, they [were sent] to the work camp.

SL: So you were separated from your mother and your sisters?

SM: The whole family. At that point, we don't see nobody more.

[12]German for 'work camps'.

SL: Did you see any of them ever again?

SM: No, never again, never again. No. Went in the camp. The first thing everybody -- no, there was an interpreter, a Greek interpreter. He's says, "If anybody he had malaria in Greece" — because the Germans, they knew there was malaria disease in Greece — "they should go out. We're going to take them in the special hospitals." That was all lie. That was no truth. They go right to the gas chamber. But we don't know nothing. Everything was smooth. Everything we did not know -- we didn't know what was going on.

SL: You did, or you did not know?

SM: We did not know. We did not know at all what was going on. A few people tried. I'm alive myself. I didn't see nothing, and I had some people next to me, they want to go out. I said, "You stay here." But no. But a few people, they went out. What happened, we don't know. The second step was, everybody in the room take a bath, shower bath. Shave hair, complete, bottom up. Men barbers -— they shaved them. They shaved the whole body, they shave the whole body. And we left the clothes down -— everything, and they gave us striped clothes and we went out, the jacket, the pants, and the cap.

SL: Did they tattoo your arm?

SM: Not yet, not yet, no. No, that's not too far, that's second, that's after. And they were dispersed in different blocks in Auschwitz. So many people in one block and so many people in another block. Somebody they used to take this group goes in this block and this group goes into another block. My block was thirteen. It was two blocks. And there was no barrack, there was a cement, was a brick foundation, brick home, and my brother-in-law, always together, but we went together. In the first forty days, they don't take you to work out. They call quarantine. After the forty days, you know, they are ready to send you out to work. At that time, the first week, the first days, the tattoo came. Everybody had numbers. My number: 116520. My brother-in-law was next to me; he's got 521, one number higher than I have. Then we stay together all the time in the same block.

I was lucky; the chef from the block was a German prisoner, non-Jew, politician. Every prisoner had, as a Jew, the Mogen David.[13] The non-Jews, they had a triangle. The triangle, the different colors, was the specification for what reason he is in camp. Mine was a politician, the chef of the block, he used to be in charge of the whole block, but he's prisoner, too. He's non-Jew, he's a prisoner, he wore the same clothes we have, but these people don't go to work.

SL: Now I am just a little bit confused. Are you saying that on your uniform that you had a Jewish star and the head of the block wore the triangle?

SM: The triangles. Any other non-Jews they wore the triangles, but with different colors, and every color is the meaning, why is the reason he's in camp. And my block chef was a politician, against the regime. That's the reason he was in camp. For him was a young fellow from Belgium, worked for him. Work, what do you mean? Cooked for him, special organized foods, cleaned the room, shined shoes, this. There used to be like a servant, and this guy never went out for work. He used to work for him. I met this young fellow because I spoke the French language, and he took me as a helper to him. I used to help him. He was a type, he didn't like to work, and I used to do his job. The chef in charge of the block, he used to speak a few words of Spanish, and I couldn't speak German all the time, and I used to speak with him a few words of Spanish, and he used to like me. And he told me, "I won't let you go out work. You're going to stay here with me." After the time, the forty days, you know, you had to go out to work and he keep me in the block to work for him. It was against the law, but he sacrificed himself, and he hide me when a control was, or something. I used to hide myself.

SL: Can you recall his name?

SM: No.

SL: Or the name of the French, the Belgian boy?

SM: Yes, Schulick, Schulick. The Belgian boy, yeah Schulick. This I remember, there I remember one. I used to collect old butt cigarettes from his pockets and give to our friends. Everybody was real happy

[13]Hebrew for 'Star of David', Jewish star.

in the morning when I used to give every day to different guys. Just a butt -— they weren't even cigarettes. But they had the rights to receive package from home, the non-Jews. The parents sent the package. Now, the time came for work, my brother-in-law went out, but he gave him a good job, something not — there was different jobs to be done.

But they left the camp in the morning, and evening you supposed to be, they coming back. Every evening there used to be an *Appell*.[14] *Appell* mean to count the people. How many went out, how many there's supposed to be coming back. If anybody miss, til they bring dead or alive, so many thousand people, they had to stand until the one person missing was inside the camp. Even if he was dead, it don't mean nothing. But the count have to be right. They used to count. Now, food was a bowl of soup, a liter of soup, different types of soups every day, and a small piece of bread, sometimes margarine, sometimes marmalade. This was every twenty-four hours.

SL: Did you receive any special rations?

SM: I used to get something, but I was not, I couldn't even eat the soup. I was happy when I used to eat a piece of dry bread or with marmalade. That was more satisfaction for me. People, they used to eat more than one liter of soup. These people got their body full of water, more liquid, and they got sick. You had to put their fingers and their leg on a — it was just like a soft piece of rubber. They got sick. They fill themselves on the soup, it was not good. I never had more than one liter of soup. Now, my brother-in-law was happy when I used to come back from work, I used to always serve more food than anybody else. I used to help him.

SL: So you helped with the distribution of food?

SM: Yes, sometimes, sometimes.

SL: Did you serve food in other blocks?

SM: No, no, no. They used to bring the food, they used to bring from the kitchen in the block and everyone in the line. Sometimes I used to — it was not my job, this. My job was just take charge of the block.

[14]German for 'roll call'.

SL: Did you recall what your brother-in-law was doing? His job? Was he in munitions factory?

SM: No. No. No. He didn't go in munitions factory, some odd jobs outside the camp. I had other friends, the shoe repair shop, I have one friend in California, he was in the same block, he used to be, he use to work the shoe repair shop. It was not shoe repairs, it was wooden shoes we used to get, there was no regular shoes. The regular shoes, they took them all. He use to tell me how many gold pieces, they use to find in the shoes, when they tear apart, show everybody brought gold. I, myself, my father put in every pair of shoe for my sisters, 5 pieces of gold, 3 pieces, 2 pieces. On my shoes, my mother told me, don't - something happens to you, act nothing. Don't do any good, don't do much good, but something, sometimes, you know, you can get some piece of bread with one gold piece, but not in Auschwitz. In Warsaw, because there was the Polish civilians, they use to give, say $20 gold, you know, just for a loaf of bread. Just for a regular loaf of bread, $20 gold.

SL: How were you able to keep your shoes, didn't you have to give them up in the very beginning?

SM: Some they keep the shoes, some they keep the shoes.

SL: So you got your back?

SM: I got mine back. I had mine back and I had nothing in them. Now one day, the chef of the block, he told me, Salvatore, you come with me. We went out of the camp, he used to allow flowers, he used to, if you were inside the block, inside his room. He told me, we going together. I was ready, you know, to go out of the camp, for the first time I went out of the camp. He had a lot of friends, he had a lot of friends, this man. And he went in one of the barracks out of the camp, belonged to the camp, outside of the camp, and he told me, you stay here, and I am coming back, and I thought, till he comes, I sit on a stone. All of a sudden, one of the German officers, this was our watchman, he use to be the one that belonged to a gang who went by. Soon he came, I get up, I took my cap off, you know, I say [sounds like: en guard]. He says, to me, "What are you doing here?" Before I say nothing, he give me one slap, he threw me down. He threw me down, he took my number, and he left. And once [the

chef returned] again, I told the story, and he says, "not too good." We went inside the camp, inside the camp, and he told the bookkeeper from the camp to erase me from his books because the officer is gonna come to look for me, and he came to look for me. He came to look for me, a few days after he came. I was told he was taking transport, he went out. If he had meet me, my punish, there was transfer in one other camp, people don't live more than three days, the job. I was lucky, he save my life, this man.

SL: The block chef.

SM: The block chef. He himself, one day, they came to pick him up. I don't know some people told he used to take packages from non-Jews, they used to get packages, steal the packages from them. It was wrong. That man he touched nothing for nobody. And one morning he was taken away, he was taken away, and he transfers in another camp. I don't see this man again. What happened, I don't know what happened.

In September, I was staying in Auschwitz close to six months. In April, [counting months] six months -- Oh, in between the line I didn't tell you. In Auschwitz was one block for women for experimental purposes. These women, they never went to work. Their job was, they use to take them in the morning, and pick flowers, and I see them. You couldn't speak, you couldn't speak one word to the women. One day, one of the women, it was a young girl, she make signs to me while I was working. My sister is in the block.

SL: She told you that your sister was in the block?

SM: My sister was in one of these blocks of experimenters, you know. And that's all. It was #10 block, the number was #10 block, I remember now. This is -- they use to bring, even from Birkenau, Birkenau was an accent to Auschwitz. It was smaller *lager* [camp]. Birkenau, that's where there were the crematoriums and the furnace and everything. There is a Birkenau, not far from Auschwitz. Auschwitz was just a small village, you never thought it was a camp, clean, not one piece of paper on the floor, flowers there, and by the door there was a big sign "*Arbeit macht frei*" – "Work Make Freedom."

There was a big sign on the door, this way the people, and music. In the morning when the people going to work, the music, when they coming back, with music. Former business musicians, just like this woman, you know.

SL: They are playing for time?

SM: Yeah, she was just people, that's what their musicians were.

SL: Can I ask you a question? After the block chef you say was taken away, what kind of job then did you have to do?

SM: The new block chef, he took me, in his position, I didn't stay long, you know, but he didn't send me, I didn't go, I didn't work. When I was in Auschwitz I didn't work at all. There lucky I was, you know. I never went one day outside to working, all the time, you know, I stay inside the block. And my brother-in-law was the lucky I was helping.

SL: So your daily routine was basically?

SM: Cleaning this, doing odd jobs inside the block. Place the holder for food and this, and this, and everything. But not outside work, I didn't go outside with them in Auschwitz.

SL: Could you describe to me what your barrack looked like, or your block looked like.

SM: It was not a barrack, it was not a barrack, it was not a barrack. It was small homes built in brick, and large rooms, and the bunk beds, three beds, one on top of the other. And the bath, this bathroom, the people use to take a bath, you know, they used to be in a different section. This block to the women, in a different section. All in one round circle. There was a good appearance. If anybody comes from outside, never knew what was going on, one of the best organized camps was Auschwitz.

SL: How many people do you think were living in that block with you?

SM: My block, about 200 people.

SL: Were you all Greek?

SM: No, no, no, no, no. Have the different nationalities, every transport when they use to come, you know, it's all mixed up, no, no, no. The first transport when we came, you know, was all from Greece, but

after I skip tell you, the first week, I was in camp, I had an argument with a French boy. I use to talk to him. I approached him, I talked to him, and asked, how long he is in camp. He was close to 3-4 years, you know, the French people came a long time before we. And he asked me if I know what this chimney is, he pointed me the chimney. I say, factories. Oh no, he says, this where they burning the people 24 hours a day. I got so excited, I punch him. I got in an argument with him, but it didn't take me long to learn the reality, and I went and excuse myself, and I told him, I don't remember his name, because my, you know, I couldn't hold when he told me this, and the reality was yes. Everybody knows what was going on as the next person.

SL: You said that you didn't really go out of the block.

SM: When we were coming, the people were going out everyday. They meet each other, I get news everyday from the people. They use to tell me because they use to meet different people from different, from Birkenau, when they use to do outside work.

SL: Could you see anything in the air, in the sky, or smell anything that…?

SM: No, no, no, no, no. This wasn't possible, no. You couldn't smell nothing. It was just like a chimney, as a factory chimney, exactly.

SL: You didn't smell any odor?

SM: No, no, we were not so close either, no, we were not so close. There was miles, when I say close, but there was not, a mile was more far than a mile, to the camp, Birkenau.

SL: I think I am going to stop here and we'll turn the tape over.

SM: Sure.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 1

TAPE 3, SIDE 2

SL: To continue in that same vein about the knowledge that you might have had about what was going on to other people in Auschwitz, did you ever witness any beatings or any --

SM: Yes, yes, yes. Ah, a Czech man, from Czechoslovakia, non-Jew, you know, this man was beaten with 25 beats. I don't recall the reason why, the reason he was beaten, you know, but I was not too happy to see this man when he came back after the 25 beats. The beats were in different ways. They use to lay the human on the table, [inaudible] and two people with rubber hose and the men on the table, they use to count, they have to count.

SL: The man on the table had to count?

SM: The man on the table has to count himself. If he miss the count, he has to recount 1 to 25. [inaudible] was a, like a tariff, like anything wrong, it was [inaudible] and there was, the man after this, he couldn't walk for weeks, for weeks. Now all of this, are you open this?

SL: Oh yeah. Yes it's on.

SM: Now all of this, I use to wear, even on the jobs, when I never mentioned to you, the *kapos*, the foremans of the Jewish workers were the Germans. The most criminals, those were the foremans [*kapos*]. By the barracks, I never see this, they use to tell me on the job, when they, they put the shovel, the handle of the shovel, on his throat, and two people in one corner got hung, and the guy got killed.

SL: I am sorry, I don't quite understand what you meant by that? They put the handle of the shovel, how did they?

SM: On the neck, underneath his chin.

SL: Underneath his chin?

SM: Underneath his chin, you know, and they put one in one corner of the handle and one in the other corner standing.

SL: But they lifted up on it and broke his neck?

SM: Broke his neck, killed the guy and he gone. Some they use to be killed on the job, just for one butt of cigarette. The soldiers themselves never had cigarettes, but they have a fund. There was a circle, around, there was a limit how much a worker can go over the limit, he had the right to shoot him, and they use to do it on purpose, they guy use to scar with a pick and shovel working and you use to smell the cigarette. The soldiers watched and they use to do it on purpose and threw the box out of the limits. The guy jump for the box, shoot him. Talk about cigarettes, lot of people die by smoking. They use to take leaves on the tree, newspapers was larger, but there was no newspaper there, and the cement blocks, papers, and they use to roll, make a --.

SL: Where did the paper come from?

SM: Cement, cement blocks. Cement *bags*.

SL: Oh from the bags?

SM: Bags. I say block, I am sorry. Cement bags. And they used to take a small piece of paper from the bag and put the leaves in and start smoking. These people, they real, they get, some of them use to change a piece of bread for a butt of cigarette. They use to wait for 24 hours to get the portion of the bread, they used to change, I did change my bread only once, for a piece of soap once.

SL: For soap.

SM: For soap, not other, just for a piece of soap. Nothing other.

SL: How long did the soap last?

SM: Just a small piece, just sliver. Two things in the camp I was happy to have, a handkerchief and a piece of soap. I use to get a piece of cloth, anything, you know, it was some luxury, something to put in your pocket to blow your nose.

SL: How did you think about death after a while, was it something that you began to accept because it was all around you or was it something that you could never really tolerate?

SM: Death, myself?

SL: What you saw around you, the death of other people, how did you feel about that type of thing?

SM: This we can come [to] when I was in Warsaw, we never went, when I was in Warsaw. I had a typhoid myself, I remember, I think I went, when I was in Warsaw, I had a typhoid.

SL: Oh, you had typhoid.

SM: Did I?

SL: No we haven't talked about Warsaw yet.

SM: Oh, oh. Then I tell you how I was jealous when somebody else can die and I can't die. In Warsaw, this was past when we left Auschwitz, then it is going to be ==

SL: Okay, we'll talk about that.

SM: Okay.

SL: You mentioned that you had some friends, were they mostly Greeks, the friends that you had there?

SM: Yes, yes, mostly Greek.

SL: Did you feel close to them?

SM: As much, when I was in charge of the block when I was working, I was in charge and working for this man, as much I could help them, I did. I did.

SL: Did anybody resent you for having a little bit of a better position there in that block?

SM: No, no. No, nobody, nobody. Only the jealous is Belgian boy, he's the one, he anger me, and after he was rejected because, the block chef, he found out he was not doing nothing. He was playing big shot, you know, and I was doing his job, but I couldn't say one word against him because I owe, the job, he give it to me, he is the one who opens door for me. I was thankful, even if I was doing his job. I was never against.

SL: Were you aware of any smuggling or any organizing that was going on?

SM: No, nothing. Like what? What smuggling?

SL: Oh, smuggling of some bread, extra bread out of the kitchen, or cigarettes, or anything like that.

SM: Oh yes! It was every, oh, you don't call it smuggling, organizing, organize. Oh, yes, organize. My block chef was a big organizer, you know, because, oh, is another way on organize. Is a man in charge in

the block, they use to distribute the bread. These people, they found out, you know what they use to do? If the bread was divide in six persons, or so many portions, first before he divide, he use to take two slice from the middle section and make the bread smaller, you know, and then, and these are the people who use to have extra bread loaf breads overlap and with the bread you can buy anything, you can change anything. But some of them, they got caught. They send [sounds like: *straplewhite*], *straplewhite* mean a job you don't survive more than three days.

SL: What things were people organizing for bread? What could you get for bread?

SM: For bread? Anything, gold, anything you wanted, anything, you name it for bread. Anything. There was a man there – We go on after, when we were in Warsaw, what people can give you for bread.

SL: Did you have much contact with the Germans? The guards?

SM: No. You couldn't talk to them. I had contact with one person, that's [sounds like: we gonna mention] in Russia, an officer, I had the [sounds like: actor] of another officer in a different game, I had contact.

SL: Were you able to learn of anything going on in the war?

SM: Outside world, no, no. Just illusions, not reality, no.

SL: Like rumors?

SM: Rumors, oh, just illusions, very much this, but nothing, events, their events or nothing.

SL: What about any resistance, were you aware of any?

SM: What kind resistance? What you want to say again, resistance? You know only one way: If you tried to go against the wire, the wiring, you would be electrocuted or you'd be shot. There were a lot of people that couldn't take it, they throwing themselves on the wiring and the guard on the tower, the first thing, that's what they use to do, they shoot them. And some of them even use to beg for a razor blade to cut their veins, they couldn't take it.

SL: What kind of thoughts did you have when you there, you had time to think about things, do you remember?

SM: Just to survive it, just what one day and the next day bring. Just thinking if I'm gonna be alive one day, for me, or not, you never know. Nobody knew what the situation was, anybody.

SL: Did you think that you were going to survive?

SM: No. No. No. This was out.

SL: Did you figure that you would probably starve to death?

SM: No, the starvation was not important, but we had always, they use to say, if they lose the war, or they win the war, they gonna exterminate all Jews. That's we going to wait the end. He says the Jews, they have to be liquidated.

SL: Were you aware of any religious practices going on in the block? You weren't keeping track of any kind of holidays?

SM: Yes, one day we did keep [inaudible], it was Yom Kippur, and we refused to take the soup, the lunch soup, you know, and you know what happened. At evening, we had to stay one hour exercising up and down, because we refused to take the bread, the soup. Yeah, we knew one day was Yom Kippur.

SL: How long were you in Auschwitz before they sent you to Warsaw?

SM: Six months.

SL: Want to tell me how it happened that you left, what was the trip like.

SM: Right, right.

SL: And about the last days in Auschwitz and your departure.

SM: This bookkeeper from Auschwitz, it was a Polish man, real intellectual man, he's the one who saved me, you know, he's the one who hide me, by the German soldiers. There came an order for so many people, the first transport to Warsaw. After the ghetto was completely destroyed, they took from Birkenau and Auschwitz, from both, only Greeks. The transport was composed only for Greek people. The reason — because we don't speak Polish and the job was in contact with the Polish civilians and they don't want the Polish Jews. When the transport was organized, this man, the bookkeeper, says, "Sal, I'm going to advise you something. You got better chance to go out from this Auschwitz to

freedom than to stay here. If you want to, I can keep you here. There's no problem with me. But I'm giving you advice -— go." And I told my brother-in-law, "We go." Then we went to Warsaw. Warsaw, when we went, everyone had the wooden shoes we had now. They echo, the wooden shoes, you can hear us, so isolate. You couldn't even see a dog, you couldn't see a cat. The whole town was destroyed completely. Every home bombed, every bit.

SL: Now this was after the Polish uprising in Warsaw, right after the?

SM: 1944, after the Jewish, you know?

SL: After the ghetto was destroyed.

SM: After the ghetto was destroyed.

SL: Was it also after those few weeks when the Poles and Warsaw rebelled against the Germans?

SM: No, the Jews, when the Jews rebelled, not the non-Jews.

SL: That was in '44?

SM: This is after, this is after, I am telling you, that's gonna be after, after.

SL: Okay. You were there then in fall of '43.

SM: I was there in '43, I was there in '43 in Warsaw, you are right, it was in '43, if I came in after in late September, you are perfect, you are right. Let's go on to '44, it's long.

We arrived in Poland, in Warsaw, we were transferred by train. We came in a — there was another camp, some barracks. Just real, real primitive. No organized camp, no nothing. Just barracks. Everybody got a billet bag, for pillow, for blanket, for everything. We go inside, that's all it's going to be, if you're sleeping in a blanket. They started to organize one day, in the *Appell*, and when we were outside in the courtyard, they call *Appell*, they ask who is shoemaker, who is a tailor, who is this, you know? And I declared myself as a shoemaker. But this was a few weeks after we arrived. I worked outside, too, cleaning the bricks and everything.

SL: In the destroyed ghetto area?

SM: In the destroyed area, completely destroyed.

SL: What did you have to do with the brick?

SM: The brick — to clean the cement in between, and pile and these would sell to the Polish people. That's all, this was the job. Cold, miserable; very, very cold after the start in November, December. It was real cold.

SL: Were you still wearing your striped clothing?

SM: Always. That's the only thing. When we used to stay for the *Appell* in the morning, everybody to warm up, one used to go in back from the other, you know, just became a live out there. So I went a short time with my brother-in-law outside work, and then I got a job in the shoe repair. The foreman from the shoe repair shop was a German, non-Jew. He used to like me. We didn't have more food than anybody else but was in a warmer room working, fixing the wooden shoes from the people, and they had some for the officers, to make up the soles, to fix boots for the officers. I was in charge and another Polish Jew on the boots, and two other Jewish boys, they were for the wooden shoes. There was no difference. One day an officer brought a pair of boots, a very big guy. He had size fifteen boots. Now, we had everything primitive. The only thing we had to make the soles is wooden nails. You know what a wooden nail is? I got it downstairs, I show you sometime.

SL: A peg?

SM: A peg, yes. I did the best. I finish the shoe, the boots, then the foreman inspects, he says, "Good job." The officer came one day, says, [German[15]] — "My boots are done?" I say, "*Jawohl*." That's the general spoken, "hello, yes, yes sir." And he sat down and he put the boots on his feet and he jumped, he started screaming. Oh no. Now, what is it all about? He says, "You're going to kill me. You got a nail inside my boots. Who did, who did this job?" The foreman says, "One of my best workers. He did a good job." It was a tip of the wooden nail after it was, you know — pop up, it was all the way, and the rest didn't go inside to take them out. There was nothing — he exaggerated. He says, "I'm going to give you twenty-five." The foreman says, "[If] you give him twenty-five, I [will] go outside [to]

[15]German, tape 3, side 2, 19:05—also later in sentence.

clean the bricks. Forget about it. I don't want to stay here in the barracks." They argued for fifteen minutes, both in German. And finally the solution was, to make him happy, the foreman says, "I'm going to give him five. I'm going to give him. He fix the boot." There was nothing, just a scratch on the bit. An ordinary job, it was. And I bend down, I got five from the foreman, but not the way [the officer] would give me. He took his boots. He never showed up.

Warsaw was miserable. Warsaw was the worst, worst, worst camp I never had. People would die every day, dying, sickness, diarrhea. They came in one day, I was working inside the shoe repair shop and I saw a big truck, we were watching out the window. They took from the — there was no hospital — barrack where the people were sick, and they had the diarrhea. When you see a man, a skeleton, was a complete skeleton, nude, was fifteen below, twenty below, outside. One guy taking the number, was standing — I noticed this — wrote the number and threw them inside like a log. I don't know how many people a day they took them, took them to burn. There was no crematorium there, — just burn up. The disease started to spread in camp. My brother-in-law and I, we fell with the typhoid. I had the typhoid, and my brother-in-law's brother-in-law, all three, we fell in — sick. I don't remember how long we stayed in the hospital. People they used to die by drinking water, not clear water. They used to go — because when you have the typhoid you get thirsty — they used to go where they used to wash the pans, the dishes, the pan. Next day he was gone. Myself, like I said before, I was jealous. I found this man, he died and I can't die. And I was speechless all the time. I didn't want to talk to nobody because I had gold teeth. If they found I had gold teeth, the nearest prisoners, even Greeks or anybody, would kill me just to take the teeth and buy something. I was speechless. And that time my brother-in-law's brother-in-law, he passed away. He died. He couldn't resist. One day, I told my brother-in-law, "Even if we gonna die, we're not gonna die here. We [will] feel better." He had on his back a long circle full of pus, from the — there was no mattress. Wooden pallets, that's where we to sleep.

SL: Did he have some sort of bedsore?

SM: Worse than a bedsore, full of pus. He had one on his back. I said, "We go out, we go out. Wait until we feel better." And I went, we took one block, less than a block. I don't want to tell you, maybe one hour to walk, [like] a chicken. Both together, arm by arm, and just til we came to the block. I was lucky again. The German, the shoe repair man, came to see me, and he says, "I'm going to take you back. You come in, in a few days. I'm going to tell [the officers] I need you." He took me back in the shoe repair shop. I couldn't even move — nothing. I was not doing nothing for a week, and he kept me there. The man, he saved my life. He was the second man who saved my life in Warsaw.

SL: Do you remember his name?

SM: No, No. Hamel, Hamel, something, Herman, Herman. It was older man, it was a gentleman, real old. Was old man.

SL: I am going to have to interrupt you because we have to turn the tape over.

SM: Yeah.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 2

TAPE 4, SIDE 1 (no Side 2)

SL: So then after you recovered from typhoid, you were working back again at the shoemaker.

SM: In the shoe repair shop.

SL: What was your brother-in-law doing?

SM: Outside work.

SL: Still?

SM: Outside, even then. Outside work, yes. And I always use to save extra of the, we use to get the soup for the shoemaker shop and sometimes, you know, there was some over left, and when he use to come, and I use to give him it.

SL: Do you remember when you were doing the outside work in the beginning, what else you would find there besides bricks?

SM: Yes. Yes. Yes. I didn't see, but my friends found. One day a group of big boys, they were digging and they went down in some cellars, down in one of the homes. One of them put the pick in the ground and he hears "ding." You know what it was? A night pan, full of $20 of gold, they found, down in there underground. Everybody got some of them, they divided, like I said, they exchange for a loaf of bread or package of margarine or Parkay or something, we had no butter, you know, just margarine is good. And, besides that, they found one day, a father and a daughter underground. I don't know how long they were underground, for a year maybe, you know, they were underground.

SL: Were they alive?

SM: Alive, yeah. They were alive, they were all the way alive.

SL: What happened to them?

SM: The Germans, the soldiers, you know, saw them and they brought to the camp the next day. They were against the wall, father and daughter. They were alive, still were alive. I remember that. Now the big tragedy in Warsaw was, every day we used to see bring in non-Jewish people. When something happened in downtown Warsaw, when the partisans, they use to kill one of the Germans, the following

day they used to put big truck in the main street, everyone inside truck, and bring those in the camp and shoot them down. Used to burn, I guess there was no crematory, and burn them all. It was every day occurrence. It was nothing to do with the Jews, now. Now they come in, like you say the uprising, from the partisans and the non-Jews. The Jews were all not there anymore in Warsaw. The one we were inside, camp, has nothing to do with common life of the Germans. Another day, we saw the Gestapo to hang somebody. We not know who they were going to hang.

Next, when I used to live in the shoe repair shop, there was another barrack where they use to take the clothes and take outside the city to wash them. The man in charge was a good friend of mine, in school, played soccer together, I knew him very, very well. When he help me, he use to bring some salve, I got crabs in all of my body, you know, crabs is something you itch all over the body. Cretza?

SL: Lice?

SM: No lice, lice is not. Just like a pimple inside the body, and you itch, you.

SL: A rash?

SM: A rash, a big rash, he helped me one day. He's managed to go outside the camp, take with a soldier, you know, he always with a guard. And one day he tried to escape while he was out, and the soldier wounded, and they brought him back to the camp. For two months he was in the hospital, for two months. After he recuperate, they brought him to the camp and one morning everybody standing and watch, they put him, 24 hours, they left his body, his brother was there, his name from this man, Saul, the one who got hung. His brother, [sounds like: Sinaud], I know those two names.

SL: What was their last name?

SM: I don't remember, I don't remember. Saul. I don't remember their second name. Everybody, after his death, they tried to take some of their, for souvenirs. [Sounds like: cockleburs] on his head, you know. But for 24 hours they left the boy hung. Beside, when we talk about hung, and I should tell you, in Auschwitz when I was, one day, eight people on the line, non-Jews, again saboteurs. They use to do something against the Germans, and they took eight non-Jews and they hung in one line. Just, in

daytime, everybody out, the benches, take the bench out, and it was done. This boy, they commemorate in Israel, you know, always, because we were eyewitness.

SL: Is his brother still alive?

SM: Yeah, he's alive, he's alive in Israel. I'm not gonna mention that. More details on the Greeks, the survivors. My brother-in-law in Israel, he is in contact with them. And the majority went to Israel after the freedom. They stay in Germany for a short time and then they went there. Now we talk about Warsaw again. Warsaw in '44, the Russians were coming to capture the town, and the Germans decide to destroy the camp we had. Not to show even signs of the camp, and one day they told us we were gonna be transferred. Everybody outside, whoever can walk, 50 miles a day, we gonna transfer by trucks, another trick. I saved a few lives for them too, you know, oh I can't walk, I can't walk, you will, you better walk, you wanna die, you die on the road. You know where you are gonna go.

SL: Can I interrupt you, you are gonna have to start talking about leaving Warsaw now, aren't you?

SM: Yeah.

SL: Okay. Can I ask you a few more questions about Warsaw?

SM: Yes.

SL: What did the camp look like that you lived in? Were there barracks?

SM: Just plain barracks, just simple barracks. Like I said before, we have nothing, is no compare with Auschwitz.

SL: Were you close to the city? Where were you located?

SM: The only thing, [sounds like: Paviok], the only thing I remember, when we use to take a bath, we use to go into Paviok. Paviok was out of camp and was a prison or something, don't know what it was, this place, but we use to go take a bath there. Just like with, close to the town but still in the ghetto, still inside the ghetto, we never went out.

SL: You were inside the ghetto, inside the ghetto area?

SM: The Jewish ghetto, that's where the camp was built, the work was there, across the ghetto.

SL: How were you treated by the guards? As bad?

SM: Bad, bad, bad, we had one guy, he use to be like a pig. [speaks in German], you know, the way he used to call on guard in the morning, you know, just like a pig.

SL: So it was not unusual for people to be beaten and the same thing as in Auschwitz?

SM: No, not in Auschwitz. Even after you took staples you steal from the kitchen, you know, there was punishment. The same tactic was all over, and beaten.

SL: Now when you were talking about organizing then in Auschwitz, and the you said that you did it also in Warsaw?

SM: I did in Warsaw, not as good as in Auschwitz, you know. Warsaw was miserable for everybody because they got sick and everything, and, you know.

SL: But was there organizing going on?

SM: Not much, there was not much, the organize was the people only use to go outside and deal. I -- Oh, the only thing I could organize, and I use to make shoestrings from leather, you know, and give to my brother-in-law, and he use to bring a piece of bread from the Polish people.

SL: Did you have any contact with any Poles?

SM: No, no.

SL: Do you remember your brother-in-law talking about contact with Poles?

SM: Yeah, they use to, the workers, yeah, they use to.

SL: How did the Poles treat them?

SM: Not good, not good, because I remember myself, the first week I went out, I went out, and I had to throw a brick to one of the Polish people, I don't know what he told me, what he did, I don't know, I was on top cleaning, and he was on the bottom. I make believe the brick fell down, and I did it on purpose, you know, the brick.

SL: You dropped it?

SM: I dropped it. They were bad, they were real bad, the Polish people against the Jews. Only if you had given something, you know, that's -- there was no friendship, no feelings, no nothing, nothing.

SL: Had you known about the destruction of the ghetto before you got to Warsaw?

SM: We had no way, where we suppose to know?

SL: What did you learn about it when you were there? Was it just rumor or did the Germans tell you what had happened.

SM: The Germans won't tell us. We found out, you know, we knew there was a ghetto there. You know, we knew there was a ghetto, and the destruction, you can imagine, you can envision, what's the situation was. Then we found out, you know, the fault, and this, and this. The only people they defend, the only people that knew more of reality, was the Polish people. They knew where the camps were. This is what killed the crematoria, we fight here. The uprising in Warsaw won't be forgotten, it will be in history for centuries, because those people sacrificed individually, they had inside a strong ambition to take one of the Germans with them. We had the same thing when we were in Warsaw, but we had no chances, where, what chance we gonna have? You got no guns, you got nothing, even the body itself has no power to fight. How much power you gonna get, how far you gonna go?

SL: What kind of feeling did you have being there in the middle of all that destruction? Was it eerie?

SM: Very eerie, even when we went there, to see, whole world bombed and everything, you feel like a, you come in someplace, I don't know what you expect for yourself, what it's going to be like, it was not too happy. It was more happy to see Auschwitz, you know, where everything, you know, "mise-en-scene," the French says, when something, you make a show, appearance. Over there, there was no appearance, the rooms, everything was there where you are, you can see what happened.

SL: Well, then I want to get back to your leaving Warsaw. You said it was in early 1944, basically because the Russians were coming in?

SM: Right.

SL: So why don't you tell then about that march, that walk that you had to make.

SM: When I say, beside the people on march, we left close to a hundred people to destroy the camp, to destroy the camp. One of my cousins left with this hundred people. We never heard for sure they killed him after they do the job, you know, they killed them.

SM: Now, the march from Warsaw, the worst part, was this was in August — hot. It was July, August, I don't remember exactly, but it was really warm. They wouldn't give you water, no water. One day on the road a young girl, she had some few apples and she threw to us and I catch one of them and I put in my mouth, just to put moist in my —- oh, there's another episode on the march from Warsaw. One of the Greek boys, he hide himself when we stopped for rest. One of these, you know in the road, they put in the ground these cement round things with the water inside, there were some empty ones on the road and he hide himself there. I never heard if he survived or he got caught. We never — we left them and we --

SL: Now when did you start on this march?

SM: I think it was between July and August, it was warm weather, really warm weather.

SL: So you were in Warsaw for close to a year?

SM: Close to year, close to a year, that's right. About ten months, right. From March 1943 to 1944.

SL: So you left before the Polish uprising in Warsaw?

SM: We don't know what was going on. We knew they deported us. What was the reason? We don't know. They deport. Where is destination? Dachau.

SL: They told you that?

SM: Yes, Dachau, they told us.

SL: Did you know what Dachau was or where it was?

SM: No, just a camp, just a camp. Outside of Poland, I don't know. And one day after a rest, was in a field, we tried to dig water from the ground. Somebody had a spoon, somebody had something, and we went real deep. We got some few drops of water, black like a coal. Everybody, he got some drop of that. This is most reality. I never forget it. On the march, when we were again going — the destination

was Dachau. One day another stop and I saw some horses, German horses, and one of them, he had the bag, the leather bag, on his head and drinking water. I took my pan and I got water from it, full of flies, the water. The German soldier saw me. He came from the back with a bayonet and he's giving me — he was pounding, giving, and I was drinking water. Full of flies, the water was. I'll never forget this. The march was close to five days, five, six days it was, until we went to Russia [sic]. On the third day, they give you — they stop on the river. They told [us] we can have water. We went inside the river and there was a bridge, a pont, and the soldiers were watching. I was drinking, another fellow next to me, he was drinking water, but I heard bullets. They shooting. Zzz, zzz, zzz. All of a sudden I see the man next to me, he bend. I try to grab him, to pick him up, he had one in his shoulder. I left the man there. I couldn't do nothing with him. I went out. A few people they kill just like, you see a bird, to make fun, you want to shoot a bird? They were doing this while they were watching, and shooting the people drinking water. We went back on the road, people couldn't walk. They stopped. There was a German officer going with a jeep up and down, shooting. We were four thousand people on the road, exactly, I don't know how many people we arrived in Dachau, our destination. The rest were shot on the road.

SL: Do you have any idea, do you recall how many people survived the march? 1,000 or 500?

SM: Close to two thousand, we came our destination. Fifty percent, 50 percent, if I am not mistaken exactly, but about 50 percent of the people from the march never made it. They didn't make it.

SL: All four thousand of you were in that camp?

SM: Yes.

SL: And you were all Greek?

SM: No. [Later] they started bringing in more people again.

SL: More people came in afterwards?

SM: More people came after. The first ones was only Greeks. The first transport was a Greek. We were close to ten months after — different nationality.

SL: All Jewish.

SM: All Jewish. Italians — the Italians came. A friend of mine is now in Italy, he is an accountant, you know. Few Italian people came to camp, one of them Emil, you know, he is in Italy, he use to write too, real good, nice man. He got married after freedom and everything. I was ready to marry his sister, yeah, she's in Israel now. I show you a picture sometime. Now Dachau --

SL: Can I interrupt you for a second? You said that the march took only five days?

SM: Four, five, six days.

SL: That's a very long distance though from Warsaw to Dachau. How much do you think you marched every day?

SM: About 30 miles, we have to. Sure it is a distance, you are in Poland.

SL: I am surprised it didn't take longer than five days. I would have thought a couple weeks.

SM: A week, no, no, no, no more than a week. I don't think no more than a week. It was no more than a week, no, no, I don't think it was more than a week.

SL: Did they give you any food at all?

SM: Yes, but you couldn't eat. This was the worst part. If you thirsty, nothing swallowed in your body. Everything was dry. Yes. They give a piece of bread, but no water, no water. Is this on one side, on both sides?

SL: We are just ending this side.

SM: And I think I am going to call it a day, please.

SL: Well, we can finish right now and turn the tape over.

SM: Sure. Sure.

END OF TAPE 4, SIDE 1 (no Side 2)

TAPE 5, SIDE 1

SL: We got as far as the forced march that you were on, to Dachau. That was in late 1944 that you got to Dachau?

SM: '44.

SL: Why don't you tell me what happened in Dachau, what happened when you first got there and what did you end up doing there?

SM: We didn't do nothing. We were waiting to be transport, to be transported. We didn't took to work, didn't take any other job, just waiting to be transported.

SL: Were you living in any barracks?

SM: No, no. You mean Dachau?

SL: Yes, once you got to Dachau.

SM: Dachau, we saw, was organized camp. It was a large camp, large camp. There was many others prisoners, but I don't know how long we stay. We didn't stay a long time, and we were deported in another camp. Was no camp, they don't explain to you what we -

SL: Okay, tell me what happened to you at Dachau, you didn't stay there for very long? What did they…

SM: No, no. First we got our numbers, the number we have here.

SL: They tattooed the number?

SM: No, no other tattoo, just register the numbers, and my number in Dachau is 87819, [sounds like: it did not signify] after the 19. I remember that hurt then, and I got a document, after the freedom, you know, I got a document from Dachau, with the number was registered. No, the camp was in a forest, and in Poland, the general word is *Waldlager*. *Wald* is forest, *lager* is camp, *Waldlager*. The job for us was to cut the trees and make room for some nature work they were doing to camouflage the airplanes, the large tunnels. Thousands and thousands tons of cement and iron, even in the city, much of the cement and iron was spend there. And the majority of the job is was to transport cement. People, there was real hard jobs in the conveyors, 50 pounds, sometimes two bags, 100 lbs of

cement. Up and down, the conveyor was going. One guy, lifted a bag, on his shoulders, and another guy unloaded me when you go down.

SL: It was a human conveyor? It was a chain of human beings.

SM: Chain conveyor, a chain of human conveyors. Yeah. There was no one to the other, chain, exactly what you said, there was no mechanical. A chain of conveyors. And myself, I was lucky again, I worked in the shoe repair shop there. But I have bad luck. I was lucky and I had bad luck. One day, an officer, a German officer came to the barrack where we use to work, and he discovered I had two pair of pants, wearing two pair of pants, you are not allowed to wear two pair of pants. I forgot to tell you, this camp, was not only Jewish, were Italian prisoners, civilian prisoners, and I use to handle with the Italian people, give something, exchange, and even I had some marks, *deutschmarks*, you are not allowed to have one single marks, and I had marks in my pants. The officer found I had the two pair of pants, he took me out of the barrack and the shoe repair shop, and he asked me to take out of one pair of pants. He moved two feet from me, the first thing I do before I took my pants, I threw the money I had in my pocket, I threw away. He took my pants and he came and he says, "When I feel you, you had something in your pockets," you know, and well I say, "I had nothing, papers, I had nothing." He got so mad, he took his gun and he point gun. "I'm going to shoot you, if you don't tell me what you had." "I had none." He then say, "No, no, no." He called the foreman. He ask what kind of national I am. He's says a Greek. Ack, Greek. And he ordered the foreman fire me from the shoe repair shop and put me cement driver. I will stay longer, I had friends, you know, and I got different job, cutting trees, long trees, we use to cut in the forest, you know.

SL: Was that an easier job than the cement job?

SM: Oh yes! Yes, the cement was inhaled, and you was breathing, everything, even if your nose in cold weather, the cement got in the nose, you couldn't even breathe. That was the worst job, people use to live a week, that's all, no life, that was one of the worst jobs. But I got lucky, I got away from it. One day we were cutting trees, the young, the short guys, they use to be in the middle section, you know,

they didn't carry nothing, the tow line, one each corner, that's where the weight was there. One day, I got mad at my own people, I told, "We are leaders, we have to judge the logger, [sounds like: I haste and carry] and to make easy for everyone." And I put a tree on the ground, and I told one guy, "You go on one corner and I go on the other corner and we both will carry the tree and show that even with two people can carry the tree. The one's down the other way, they not doing nothing. You never know, an officer, a German officer, was watching what I did. I never pay attention. End of the day, the *kapo* from my group came and he says the officer want me. He want to make me *kapo*, he told, you know, I am a good worker and he gonna give me the job. *Kapo* was, make the other people work and he don't have to work. No, I said, I don't speak German, and I didn't take the job, I didn't want it. My brother-in-law at the time was in same camp, together. We had several attacks, airplane attacks. This was not on the camp where we use to live in the barracks, our barracks were inside the forest -- but on the job itself, because the intelligence service, they knew what was going on there. They use to come, Canadians, and United States planes and bomb the place, because there was, they knew it was strategic point, [where] Fuhrer hides the planes.

SM: We stay there, and the time was in '44, close to a year, close to a year, until in '45 one day everybody deported, to be deported. Nobody knew where we were going. They put close to four, five thousand people from different small camps, you know, the groups, they organized all together, and we went by train. The train was going, we didn't know what destination, where we're going, we don't know. We found out after, actually, where, we found after [that] they knew the Americans were coming, and they didn't want to give us to the American people, and the destination was Tyrol in Austria to shut down, to kill.

SL: They were going to kill all the people from the train?

SM: Kill everybody on the train, no, in the mountains.

SL: Everyone was on the train but taken in the mountains.

SM: On the mountains, on the mountains, right. One day we see the train stop. They open the doors, and the guards, they run away, and everybody, you know, thought we were free. We didn't know what was going on. They started going [into the] how you call, there is no forest, the gardens, the, field, the field, open fields, and everybody was running on the field, just like we were — I had two Jewish girls with me, daughters from one rabbi.

SL: You had girls? Had they been in the camp? Were girls with you in the camp?

SM: Sure, there were girls.

SL: I didn't know that there was any women and men together at all.

SM: On this transport, on this transport.

SL: Had they been with you in the camp those girls?

SM: No, in different — no, not together. We met on the train. They were in different, separate, but when we run, you know, when they opened the doors, we met together. And my brother-in-law was there. All of a sudden we heard the Germans, [speaks in German?[16]] — "Come back, come back." Some of them, they had the chance to escape, they went far. But they start shooting and they start shooting. We came back. I go inside the train and my brother-in-law was behind. One of the guards, he took a gun. He tried to shoot him. An officer, a German officer, he hollered, [speaks in German?[17]]. He start the gun to shoot him, and I drag him inside the train. The train starts going, going again. We stop again. We heard the planes shot the train. They thought we were German soldiers. The train stopped. A few people, from our people, went on top of the train and were showing our clothes, the prisoner clothes.

SL: They waved them?

SM: They waving and sign what we are, and they run away [inaudible]. A friend of mine, I was looking for another [inaudible], he got one in his leg.

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[16]German, tape 5, side 1, 11:20.

[17]German, tape 5, side 1, 11:50.

SL: He got shot in the leg?

SM: He got shot in his leg. Because they were shooting, they were shooting outside. I wish I had -- after the war, they cut him in the leg. He survived, but he took his leg off.

SL: I wanted to go back and ask you about that *Waldlager*.[18] They took you from Dachau to work in the *Waldlager*?

SM: Right.

SL: What types of barracks did you live in?

SM: Very primitive. Real, real primitive. No organized camp, nothing, nothing. Just like a tent barrack. There were so many people like sardines inside.

SL: Slept on the floor?

SM: On the floor. There were no beds, no nothing.

SL: What kind of food did you have?

SM: Oh, the food was similar — soups, soups, and main meal they used to give a small piece of bread with small piece of sausage, but mostly a little soup a day.

SL: Was the life there similar to the life you had had in Auschwitz? How did that camp compare to Auschwitz?

SM: Worse, worse.

SL: Why?

SM: Because it was an unorganized camp. Auschwitz was an organized camp. It was completely different, like Warsaw was unorganized camp, this — unorganized camps.

SL: Did there a lot of killing going on or did people die mostly from the work?

SM: Dying, dying. There was no killing there, no, there was no killing. Just you couldn't make it — dying. We stop, [inaudible] the train was going. All of a sudden again the train stops. The jeeps, the American entourage, they opened the doors. We had even in the train dead people, sit on top. There's

[18]German for 'camp in the forest'.

no other way — what are you going to do? Stay next, until we see what's the result, when are they going to open the doors. Then they opened the doors, and the Americans were there. The freedom was there. The town where we were free was Seeshaupt. But the train divide in two. The train, the one went one destination, the other train went another destination. All of a sudden I lost my brother-in-law, when I was free. I knew he was in the other part of the train, but where they went, I don't know nothing. I don't know what was going on. I was with these two Jewish girls, the same we [inaudible] together. The town [where] we were liberated was Seeshaupt, I remember -- nice town, German town. The first thing they did, they concentrated all guards, the German guards, they put them in jeep. They took together. And then they took the people from the town to go and see what was going on, the people dead inside the train.

SL: They forced the townspeople to look?

SM: They forced the civilian people to look, just to look. I was standing there. A woman, she didn't believe it, she turned her face. The officers, the American officers, gave her a slap in her face — a push, not a slap, "Just look, don't turn your face away." Now, the guards are still there. They're going to transport — where, we don't know. One of the officers, American officer, was spoken French, I spoke French with him. He gave me his gun, he says, "Shoot anyone you want to" — from these German guards — "who you think was one of the bad ones." I never took his gun, I didn't want to. I was crazy from the freedom. And for twenty-four hours after freedom we had the right to take, to go in the house, in the store, to take anything you want, anything you want. A lot of people became rich. A lot of people became rich. Gold and diamonds and this and this. I went and asked a German woman and I begged for a handkerchief, that's all. I was — just to have a handkerchief. I was happy to have a handkerchief to blow my nose. After the twenty-four hours everything was normal. You could touch nothing. And they put us in different places to stay, to live.

SL: In German houses?

SM: Yes. To stay.

SL: What was the reaction of the Germans when they looked in that train? How did the civilians react when they saw what was inside the train?

SM: "We don't know." Always the German people they used to say, "We don't know what was going on. We don't know what was going on." [speaks in German?][19]—"We don't know." They knew everything. I stayed a few days in this small town and I met a group of French soldiers and the American army, and they gave me clothes, army clothes, you know, army clothes they wear. Food, as much as you want, but at that time I told myself, "You have time to eat. Don't force." There's a lot of people die from overeating after their freedom because their stomach was shrunk and you put rich food, you know, and it won't take it. A few people died, few people died. The French soldiers, they want I should enroll and go to France because I told them I was in France. "No," I said, "I have a brother-in-law. We were all the time together and I would like to find where he is." One day there was a pyramid of bikes someplace. I took a bike. I told myself, I don't know, what kind of destination I'm going to — I ask where's the town, how many miles from there. Ten kilometers, they told me. I took the bike, all by myself and I end in another small town called Weilheim. I found a few people from camps there, not too many. And I found two Greek. They were living in some home. [Inaudible] and they gave me a room where to stay. And they ask me, "You want to stay with us? Come on, stay with us, all together." And I stayed with them. But after, I found a different room, I took them and we lived together, all three together. They both are in Israel now. Information about the other survivors, somebody give it to me, this is a camp, Feldafing. There's the majority of people, that's where they are. Where is Feldafing? So many miles. I took a train, there was a train. I went to Feldafing, my brother-in-law was there. I found him.

SL: How long after liberation was this, just a month or so?

SM: A month, less, less. Short time. Close to a month; exactly, close to a month.

SL: When you were liberated and you first met up with the Americans, how did the Americans treat you?

[19]German, tape 5, side 1, 18:15.

SM: The Americans? Good, good. At which point?

SL: Right after liberation. Did you receive kindness from them, the troops, or how did they ---

SM: What we get. What do you expect? You wanted food, they give you food. You want this, they gave you.

SL: Did you need medical treatment? Did you need any?

SM: Anyone that needed medical treatment, they took you to the hospital, oh yeah. Exactly.

SL: Did you ever have to be hospitalized?

SM: No, no, no. I was weak but still I was in good health. No, I didn't go to hospital. I was in good health.

SL: When you met, okay you went to Feldafing and you met up with your brother-in-law

SM: My brother-in-law and many other Greeks.

SL: Friends that you had had from the camps?

SM: Friends from the camps, sure.

SL: Did you stay there, or did you go back to Waldheim?.

SM: No, no, no I didn't stay there. I went to Waldheim. And short time after, I brought my brother-in-law, in Waldheim. Waldheim was no camp, everyone was living in different individual German homes, private. In a short time, I campaigned for my brother-in-law and they elect him to the president of the camp in Waldheim, and the majority of them not Greeks were Polish people, Italian people, you know.

SL: Was there an organization of survivors in Waldheim?

SM: Right.

SL: And your brother-in-law was the --

SM: But people, people even like I said, private, non-camp, there was not camp. And I forgot to tell you, I separate from those two friends I had, and I went and I live with this family. I took a room, one day I was walking main street and I used to say, [speaks in German]. There women was real friendly to people, one older woman, one day she stop me, she says, "You like to have a room?" My sister-in-law, my brother-in-law has a nice room. Her husband was a big Nazi, big Nazi, he got killed in Russia, what was the time? And she had two daughters, this is the woman, and this the two daughters. The

woman and her son, and she give me a nice room. She was happy because you know I was paying a high rent.

SL: You were renting the room?

SM: Renting.

SL: How did you get the money?

SM: At that time, like I said, it was black market, money was no problem. Money was no problem at all.

SL: Where were you getting items to trade on the market?

SM: Exactly, exactly, I will explain to you. That's my stash. That's my stash.

SL: Okay, I am gonna, okay let me turn the tape over.

END OF TAPE 5, SIDE 1

TAPE 5, SIDE 2

SL: Why don't you tell me then about the black market [in Waldheim].

SM: You could buy in the store, nothing. In the store, everything was rationed, everything was with a coupon. Beside the food, even a pair of shoelaces you couldn't buy without, you couldn't buy nothing. One day I decide to go search to buy [sounds like: matchimens]. At that time, the trains, personal trains [passenger] were not even functioning, there was no personal trains, the only trains use to go, they use to carry the milk from one town to another, that's only. No heat, no heat, no nothing. I told myself I have to do something, and I went in one town, 50 miles from Waldheim, name [sounds like: Augsburg]. And I met a gross, wholesale place they sell [sounds like: documarie] and cosmetics, many other things. And I went, I introduced myself as represent from the camp Feldafing, you know. Say I want a buy, you know, for the people, Feldafing, 5,000 people over there. And he asked me what you needed. People need toothbrushes, toothpaste, you know, anything, we pay the price, we pay the price. We pay the normal price, but that price was no much interest him. I had in my suitcase, lotta grocery, we use to get from Red Cross package, 10 sugar, coffee was the main thing, and cigarettes was another thing that, that's why he went. I told I would like to give as a gift to something recompense he gonna give some merchandise, bill me, I pay in cash. The man he give me different items, I fill a full suitcase with merchandise. Coming home, my brother-in-law says, "Where you get it?" I ask to come with me, at that time nobody was interested. He says, "Just wait, we will [inaudible] in camp, we gonna make money out of this" and I was surprised how I got. The first step, I took the suitcase they way I had and I went to Feldafing. In one hour, around the blocks, they jump, the people. They had money, I guess there was money there, no problem. I sold whole suitcase and got out and a good profit. But, the mark was no -- to buy a dollar on the black market, it was 300 marks, $1.00. Not same as now. [microphone jostled; inaudible for several seconds] And that's where I start. I use to every other week, you know, and then my brother-in-law.

SL: Did you go back to that same place?

SM: Same place, and I found different places for different items, like shoe polish. In the stores people were standing in line a mile to get one shoe polish, and I used to go down behind the door and get 5 dozen shoe polish. So that change. They didn't do it because they like me, because I used to give a --

SL: You kept trading for food?

SM: Trading for food, even I couldn't sell it. And, I just keep on doing and make good money. One day, the MP's started searching the suitcases. We use to go on the station, the main station. I use to tell this woman who used to live with me, you wait for me in the station. I had, there was small station, you know, no MP's, nothing, and I use to have a, not suitcase, it looks like, you know, the ones you see now, the girls are wearing.

SL: The backpack?

SM: Backpack, my backpack, and she use to wait for me with bike, take the merchandise, go by bike home, and I think start a trend. Then go to my other station, to the main station. And I started organize for myself. Til, it was '46, '47, '48, people they started to deport themselves, some went to Israel, some went to America, and I, myself, I had everything I bought to the destination to Israel. I had a Frigidaire, I had a stove, washing machine, no, sewing machine, still I was single yet, I didn't get married. Mattresses, blankets, I had the right to 1,000 pounds to take to Israel for the free transport.

SL: A 1,000 pounds of baggage?

SM: Baggage. In '48, my brother-in-law decided to go ahead. I told him, you go and I follow you. He went to Israel. After he left, I change mind, I'm not going to Israel.

SL: Why did you change your mind?

SM: For different reasons. The girl, I told you I found, she got married. She went before me, she went to Israel and got married.

SL: She went ahead and got married?

SM: And I told myself, in Israel -- I can go to America, I can go to Israel anytime. But it was just in my mind, just my mind when -- and I was not registered, you are suppose to register to go to America. I

could register the first day and never I thought, I never wanted to go, so did no register. One day when I decide, I met a young fellow, a young Jew, worked in one of the office of the organization the transport in Munich. I told him if he can register me behind the scene, I am gonna give him $50. The guy did the job. A few months after, they call me, [speaks in German] mean, we are ready to transport you,. There is doctors, exams, this and this, this, this. Now what am I gonna do? Frigidaire, I can't take it to America. So the Frigidaire, the sewing machine, I give to man, the one who made the purpose, for the value of the $50, if you want it. Oh, he say, yes, I am going to Israel, he was ready to go there. And, a few other items I sold. I brought here to the States, three pieces of metal, three pieces divided. And may other items, blankets, I brought two down blankets, full of down. The first year after we married, my wife says, when are you going to use yours? And I sold it for $25.00, down, down, pure down, two single blankets, that's -- I came to the States, not knowing nobody. The only person I knew was my friend, the one who was in California now, was in New York, but my destination was to, here.

SL: To Milwaukee?

SM: Milwaukee, because I declare I know from shoes, and a lot of shoe factories in Milwaukee, and they send me direct to Milwaukee.

SL: Can I interrupt you, again, because I want to ask you a few questions about Europe? First of all, after the war did you try to find any surviving family members?

SM: Sure, sure, I looked all over, but I never want to go back to Greece, it was no sense to me. If I knew some of the survivors, my sisters, were any place anywhere, I would go, I wrote all over. No signs, no signs of them.

SL: So there was no sign of them?

SM: I had the, I wrote in Greece a cousin of mine, still in Salonika, she is in Israel now. Daughter from my father's sister. She wrote me a full story about my second sister, Mary.

SL: The one that was married to your brother-in-law?

SM: Mary was not married, single girl. Only Regina was married of the four. Mary, Elenora and Bella all were singles. And she told me, I got a letter, her sisters and my sisters in one day were, they took to the crematory.

SL: In Auschwitz?

SM: In Auschwitz. They saw it, she saw it. Birkenau, Birkenau.

SL: When you lived in Waldheim, what was the name of the family, the German family that you stayed with?

SM: Gruenwald, Gruenwald.

SL: How did they treat you? How did you feel about living with Germans?

SM: They were treat me good because they had goods from me.

SL: Did you pay them?

SM: Them, not only, I use to bring food and eat, they use to cook food. At that time, they had nothing and I bring into the house everything. They took everything, they see me like a brother, like a husband, like anything.

SL: How did you feel about living with Germans? Was it hard for you?

SM: I had no other way, I had no other way to live. I didn't want to live by myself. She use to wash for me, she use to cook for me, she use to do everything for me.

SL: Did you, were you working at all? Or was the black market activity pretty much your work?

SM: That's all, that's more, it keep busy more than work. No work, work. Go by Germans for a few pennies a day? No, that's no.

SL: Was there, did you get together socially with a group of survivors there while in Waldheim?

SM: Oh yeah, oh yes, sure, we had a lot of ….

SL: What did you do there?

SM: Most dance, we use to go. [inaudible].

SL: You kept pretty active?

SM: Real active.

SL: And the other survivors?

SM: Real active.

SL: The people that were living in Feldafing, where did the come from? What nationalities were they?

SM: All nationalities, Hungarian, the main, the most Polish and I forgot to tell you, after Feldafing, I was in wholesaler, other Greek people they open barracks and they use to sell in the camp, years after, you know. And I use to sell to them because they can go sell retail what I was selling wholesale to them. And they use to buy the wholesale to me, of course they was working, everyone want buy. To sell was no problem, to buy, to bring the merchandise into the camp -- .

SL: Did you have any religious activities in the camp or with your friends in Waldheim, did you celebrate holidays in the camp?

SM: Sure, always, always, yes. I was singing [sounds like: Yom Sugurt] you know, and the rabbi, the Polish rabbi, oh he wanted me to keep on singing this.

SL: Why don't you tell me that story that you told me just a few minutes ago when the tape recorder was off about when Eisenhower came into [city name?]?

SM: [Sounds like: Isagale] was like the chief of the Greeks, was a boy, -- Oh, I never told you I was in, even in jail one night in Feldafing.

SL: You were in jail?

SM: In jail from the commandant of the camp, you know, he found me selling and he took the merchandise and said, black market and this and he took me overnight, and when the [sounds like: Austrians; "Ozzie"?] came and he found out I was, he went to the commandant, "you have Salvatore in here for what? For what?" [speaks in German]. He took me out of there. He came, he married, this boy, he married an American woman, I got a picture, in the other room. He married in Feldafing and she took him to New York. But it was many years ago, he died. There was a big celebration, the day when it was Yom Kippur day when Eisenhower came. Everybody was in the temple and MPs, a

thousand MPs, you know, the general, especially him being in camp. There was over 5,000 people in Feldafing, 5,000 people, waiting for deportation.

SL: What happened when Eisenhower came? Was it [inaudible]?

SM: We started taking pictures, him, you know, and [laughs], there was no film in his camera.

SL: You just did it to --

SM: Just to make a show, just to make believe -- like I said before, the commandant ask are they willing to take some pictures, for the job. He went and he work for the other guy.

SL: When was it that you finally made the trip to the United States?

SM: When I come?

SL: When did you come?

SM: In '49.

SL: Do you remember what month it was?

SM: Yes, in April.

SL: How did you make the trip?

SM: There was, in Bremen, there was a camp, from Bremen to be deported here. And I was on, on the ship I worked as a clerk, and I got a good recommendation from the captain.

SL: Why don't you read it.

SM: "To It May Concern: This will certify that Salvatore Moshe," the number I had 168 on the ship, "has worked as officer's pantry, as pantry man since April 17. Dated April 26, 1949." It was before I came to New York.

SL: And the name of the boat was?

SM: *Langfried, Langfried*

SL: *Langfried.*

SM: American

SL: They spelled your name with a C?

SM: This is for the vaccination that I got before I came here.

SL: Nationality, Greek, you were 33 years old, when you got all your shots. Did you register with the HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] in Munich? Who did you register with to be able to come over to the States?

SM: The HIAS.

SL: The HIAS, and they paid your passage.

SM: No, no, no, there was no, I didn't pay a penny.

SL: How long was the trip on the boat?

SM: Ten days from Bremenhoff until New York.

SL: All survivors on the ship?

SM: No, different. From Bremenhoff they were all survivors, they were not all Greeks, you know, I had one friend only, is different others.

SL: Did you sail to New York?

SM: I stayed in New York one week with my friend. My friend was in Bronx.

SL: Do you remember, did you have any special feelings when you saw the Statue of Liberty?

SM: Oh, yes.

SL: What did you think about?

SM: I heard of the Statue of Liberty, but I never see it, and I say , if this is the Statue, that's freedom, that's America. But I had the first day an adventure when I came to New York. My friend had no room for me and in same apartment was an older Jewish man, he had three rooms. Says, if you wanna you can rent. I went the first night, I went inside, the man was reading. I went inside my room, I tried to take my shoes off, the room was small, one small window and fresh painted. I couldn't stand the smell. The way I took my shoes back and I went out and I run all night the streets. In the morning I went back and the man asked me if I slept. I couldn't speak to him because I couldn't speak English then. I

went to my friend and I told the story, I say no, I can't stay there. I look for a different room, rent a different room. All night I was on the streets.

SL: What did you think about New York walking the streets then?

SM: I don't know, I was just like there, you know, they keep me busy just looking around. I couldn't stand it in the room, I thought I was in jail. And the smell, that's why, it got in my nose.

SL: So you stayed in New York only a week?

SM: A week, and [my] destination was the Jewish Family [and Children's Service, in Milwaukee]. It was on Third Street at the time.

SL: Here in Milwaukee?

SM: Here in Milwaukee. You know Schuster's on Third Street? Yeah, there was a big store on Third Street. That's where the Jewish Family Service were. I was there, and they had the room already for me. And it was on Eighth Street, with black neighbors. It was a black neighborhood at that time, too.

SL: Did you come by train to Milwaukee?

SM: Yeah.

SL: Did they meet you at the train station?

SM: They did, sure. They did, they waited for me. I had a rucksack and two suitcases and the guy show me where the room was.

SL: Do you remember who it was who met you?

SM: Pinkus, Pinkus. His son is still alive, still he is here. He still remembers me. The woman, the one she rent the room, she told me the second night if I don't change my shoes, I better move. I used to squeak, my shoes they squeak. In Europe there's no — even they used to pay to the shoemakers something to — pay a premium to make the squeak. And all that time I never thought the shoes. She says, "You wake me up when you come and the shoes squeak." Okay, I'll wear a different pair of shoes. I don't like the place. I went to the Jewish Family and I told them I going to look for a different room. But in between, the Jewish Family, they used to give me twenty dollars a week for food and

rent. On the third day I was here, I got a job. I got a job in a Greek grocery store for thirty-five dollars, and I used to work seventy hours. For the fifteen dollars difference, I work seventy hours.

SL: Where was this store?

SM: On Ninth Street.

SL: And you just found it one day walking around?

SM: No, no, no, no. I went to the Mt. Sinai Hospital for exam and I meet an old man and he ask me from where I am, this. Greek Jew—they never heard. "Come on, I show you some Greeks. There are some Greeks that have grocery stores here." And he took me on Walnut. Before he took me on Walnut, he started to propose to me a girlfriend already, to get married. And first he took meto the, on Walnut, to a tavern. There was a daughter open. The owner had a daughter. I said, "I'm not interested in one now. You told me about the Greeks. I want to see the Greeks, where they are." And he took me on Walnut. And the first thing I told the Greeks, "I am Jew." They were real nice fellows, real nice. They treat me real nice. He says, "If you want a job, we got another Greek fellow. He's on Ninth Street and he's looking for somebody." And I went there. But I work a few weeks and when I told him I'm going to night school, he didn't like the idea. He fire me -- no, he didn't fire me, he says, "We need you" and this. I used to eat there in the grocery restaurant because I'm fussy. I don't eat the Jewish food because of the garlic. I meet a Greek, he used to work in the tannery, and he told me, "You want a job?" "Yes." He took me by Greenbaum Tannery, the first time. They refused to give me a job. No English, no nothing, no job. I went to the Jewish Vocational Service and I told the story -- I told your this story? -- "I went to get a job," and "Where did you go?" "I went to Greenbaum Tannery." I spoke German to these people at the Jewish Vocational Services, and "Where did you go? Did you apply at the office? Sit down." He wrote a letter, said he'd type a letter. He told me, "You take this letter, you take it to Mr. Greenbaum himself." I went in the office. The secretary says, "He's not here. Wait." I wait. When he came, I give him the letter, he read. He asked me, "What do you speak?" I told the

languages, and when he heard Greek, "Oh," he says, "it won't be no problem." He called his time starter, as interpreter.

SL: I'm gonna have to interrupt you because we're gonna run out of tape.

SM: Okay. END OF TAPE 5, SIDE 2

TAPE 6, SIDE 1

SL: He called that man in to serve as an interpreter for you. I think you told me before that this man turned out to be the one that you became friendly with after a while.

SM: Oh yes.

SL: He didn't realize you were Jewish?

SM: Right.

SL: Yeah, you told me that story I think the first time we talked. I want to ask you some questions about the first years when you were in Milwaukee. First of all, how long then did you stay with the Greenbaum Tannery?

SM: How come you don't ask me about how I met my wife?

SL: Well, let me see, where is that question. That question is really the next one coming up. Do you want to tell me about her first, does that kind of fit in chronologically?

SM: Now when I move from this place from Pinkus, I went to the Jewish family and I told, I don't like where I am staying, and they send me to a different room, on [inaudible] Livenberg. Livenberg had an aunt, and where I was rooming was a holiday, again in May was *Shavu'ot*, the holiday *Shavu'ot*. And I went to Beth Israel to temple and the women, you know, this guy, he live with the Livenbergs, and she knew Thelma. Thelma, she use to room by her, and one day they introduced to me. I went then on a blind date because we knew, I knew, they told me, you know, we are going to the movie. Livenberg, his wife, Thelma and I, we went to the movie and that was it. Now, no English, sign language. Now I didn't like the idea, I told her, you don't understand me and I don't understand you, what sense, and I never call her, I never call her back. One day, she sent a small piece of paper, one with this Livenberg, "Are you angry or you busy?" You know, why you don't call.

SL: The aunt sent you that note or Thelma?

SM: Thelma sent it. Thelma sent it, give it to the aunt, to give it to me, where I was living there. And I explained to her it made no sense because we don't understand each other, what sense to go

together. Now we start going again. People thought I was learning English from her, but I went to vocational school every night, even when I was working, I use to go to school. And the romance start, til one day we get in a big argument, suppose to go to picnic. We went, since it was on Sunday, we were going to the picnic. Fine, I bought food and I took one of attaché' from German—-you see the briefcases they bring in, you know, with leather? I put everything there and I went to her house, she gonna take me to the picnic. She asked me, "What's the deal with the briefcase?" I said, "Food, we're gonna eat." "Why? No this is not the picnic." In Germany everyone had, if you had documents inside, or if you had food, or if you had gold inside, nobody knows what's inside. Everybody get one of them. And she brought me a cloth bag, this is. She moved the whole thing I had in the other bag, she moved into the cloth bag. Finally, I agreed, we went to the picnic. That was the first argument we had before we start. We don't agree. She thought the briefcase was not suitable for the picnic. And we started going together, til we marry -- when is *Shavu'ot,* in June? Next year, March, we marry already. March 18.

SL: 1950?

SM: '50, 1950, we were married.

SL: What is Thelma's maiden name?

SM: Seiden.

SL: Is she from Milwaukee?

SM: She is born here. She is one of the, she has five brothers, only single girl. And I had the opposite, I had four sisters and only one, myself.

SL: When was she born? When was her birth date?

SM: January 14, She became 60 --- [shouts to wife in other room:} What year you was born, Thelma? What year? 1920.

SL: What is her occupation now?

SM: She is a bookkeeper, just part-time, with a group of lawyers, downtown. Not full-time.

SL: So you married in 1950, where did you live after you got married?

SM: South side.

SL: Do you remember the address?

SM: Berman Street, all the way South Side. That's the place we found it to rent, was difficult to rent at that time.

SL: And where did you live before you came here? What other places did you live before you moved here?

SM: Before we move here? From the south side, we went up to 35th Street, on 35th Street our son was born. We also lived on 35th. On 35th, the guy he want to rebuild the house. We were ejected. I had a big problem, at that time, my son was crawling, and I took him to the court. Took to the court and the judge, he orders he can't work inside until the month notice he give to me. With the little language I knew, I told the judge, he give me $30, you know, against the rent. I say to the judge, you buy the guarantee for my son for $30, and I holler. He was ready to put me in jail. He says you came just now from the old country, you can't tell the people what to do. I say, "I'm asking. If he give me a month notice, you know, I get out in a month, but I don't expect him, he won't be even inside the door, he won't come." A big argument with the judge. From there we went on 10th Street. To 10th Street there was black neighbors, it never was no good, the home was no good. That place, we live over a year. Then Deedee was born, my older daughter. We moved from 10th Street to, when we moved on Burleigh, a duplex. Marsha was born, Marsha was a few weeks old when we move on the new home. It was a duplex, we had not much of a down payment, but at that time, you know, we had to take a second mortgage and Thelma never work. How much I managed to bring home was maybe enough to cover expenses, but we wish to give to the kids a weekly salary, you know, a weekly wages, allowance, Friday. Monday, we use to take it back, because there was nothing for milk. They were difficult years but we managed, working every day, and economize, not live in luxury, no car. I never had a car. Til we can't all fit together. By that time, it was 3 ½ years.

You asked me how long I worked at Greenbaum, 3 ½ years. Before Greenbaum closed, when I left Greenbaum, there were rumors it was going to close, and one day, I went by Mr. Greenbaum and I talked to him. "When you hired me, we had to have an interpreter to talk with each other. But since then, we worked together," -- I used to work with him, you know, some tools for leather, and the [inaudible] and everything, and I had more connection with him. And I told him I was going to resign, I'm quitting. He says, "Why?" "I have a wife and two children now to support and myself. If you guarantee I have a job steady, I stay." He called his secretary, he says, "Give Sal his vacation." There was no time for vacation. "Give Sal his vacation and good luck to you." And I had a different job open, they call me. That was Droster. And the superintendent, he called me in his office, he says, "Sal, I know where you are going, I'm gonna give you a letter of recommendation to the superintendent over there." And I work 17 years at Droster. Then they closed, and from there I went to different tanner. I work five years, closed.

SL: What was the third tannery that you worked at?

SM: Wisconsin Leather, Wisconsin Leather closed. And from Wisconsin Leather I went to Flagg Tanning. At that time they knew me. They were looking for a man like me. Now my big mistake, I made it on my retirement. It was a big mistake, I should not quit, I was making a good salary, should stick another year, you know. I didn't play it politic. I was not depressed, depression and everything, I thought it would be better to be retired.

SL: You just retired in the last month, aren't you back working again?

SM: Yes, yes, a part-time job, although the job I am doing, I don't like it.

SL: You are back at the place you just retired from?

SM: Yes, the same place, yes.

SL: And you can't, there is no way for you to get your old job back?

SM: No, because they got somebody else, they got a younger fellow. They got younger fellow. They tell me now, maybe tomorrow you decide to retire again. I lost their confidence. Even though they offered me

$1500 for my retirement, and I refused, I say I don't wanna, I'm going to work, and I got a job making, after what I was making, and a job I don't like what I am doing. I don't like what I'm doing. But it was impossible for me to stay home.

SL: You needed something to do?

SM: Yes, Not doing nothing. To think in the morning, where am I suppose go, what I am going to spend the day, or this, you know, my mind goes, it has to be occupied because this what I am telling you [his Holocaust memories], everything's still here. And when I have a free mind, it work on me and I don't like it.

SL: When was it that you moved into this house?

SM: Four years ago.

SL: So after that time you were living on Burleigh?

SM: On Burleigh. The children was growing and growing.

SL: Those early years in Milwaukee, did you face any anti-Semitism ?

SM: On the jobs? In every plant. When holidays used to come — in the beginning, people, they used to know me as a Greek. When the holidays began and I used to go [to synagogue, they would say,] "He's not a Greek. He's a Jew." That's the first thing they used to tell me. In every plant, I had problems.

SL: Did you ever fight anyone physically?

SM: Some, but I was stronger than they were because I wasn't scared from them, you know. I answered back, in the poor language, and many other, but it didn't bother me.

SL: Did they know you were a Holocaust survivor?

SM: Sure, some they did, some they did, yes.

SL: Did you feel you had problems as a new immigrant, did people take advantage of you because you couldn't speak English?

SM: No, no.

SL: You mentioned that the Jewish Vocational Service and the Jewish Family and Children's Service helped you a great deal.

SM: Oh yes. Mr. [Morris] Stern was the man from the Jewish Vocational Service. He helped me.

SL: What other types of things did they do for you?

SM: Because I had a job, so I never asked for help.

SL: Once you got the job, they stopped helping you?

SM: I never asked for help. I never went there. I never asked for help. I didn't need it. Why should I bother them? They should be there for people that need it. I had, the first week, another big mistake when I made. When I came, they were responsible for me to support me for eighteen months. I should have gone to school in that time, for these eighteen months, and learned English. And after I learned English, maybe I have better job and better chances and better future, more, probably. But, like now, I like my job. I didn't want to take their money. That's my thing, my character. That was a big mistake. I realize like now, just like the big mistake I did now.

SL: Do you recall any special acts of kindness in those first years?

SM: A lot of incidents with workers in the factories. Don't ask, because I don't want to even bring up in my mind.

SL: I'm talking about kind acts, did anything especially good happen?

SM: Oh yes, oh yes. The superintendent from Droster when he heard I'm going to become an American citizen, he told the foreman, "Sal is taking a day off tomorrow, and you pay him." And he told me, "I'm really proud a man like you became an American citizen. Children you can have as many as you want, but an American citizen, it's only once. That's all for all of your life." This man, he used to respect me, the value, and we used to share ideas on leather, and everything. And he offered me to be as a witness for [the citizenship ceremony]. He offered me, but I had witnesses, two friends, one male and one female, from temple, they knew me. You know, you're supposed to know them for five years before you became a citizen.

SL: What was this man's name?

SM: Bob Lutz.

SL: Are you still friendly with him?

SM: I didn't see for many years. He's in the market today. He sells chemical products for the tannery. And I ask many times if I can see — I never had a chance to see him. Never had a chance to see him. Very nice, very nice man.

SL: Let me ask you a few questions about your children. I know you have three children, a son and two daughters. What is your son's name and when was he born?

SM: Michael was born December 21, 1951 [1950]. Exactly a few days after, if you figure now in months the pregnancy, a few days after, I was married March 18, you know.

SL: So now explain to me 1950?

SM: 1951.

SL: You were married in 1950?

SM: I was married in 1950 in March and [to wife in kitchen:]Thelma, Michael was born in 1950? No, 1950 he was born.

SL: So you are saying it was close to her pregnancy?

SM: That is exactly what I tried to explain to you, you are right, 1950.

SL: What is Michael doing right now?

SM: He work in the bank. Northwestern Bank.

SL: And he lives in Milwaukee?

SM: Yea, sure.

SL: Is he married?

SM: Maybe today, maybe tomorrow, he be a father. And I be a grandfather, we expect this week any day.

SL: Oh, great! What is his wife's name?

SM: Debbie.

SL: Was she working before the pregnancy?

SM: Sure.

SL: What did she do?

SM: She's in charge of the stands in the stadium.

SL: She does?

SM: Mike, he's got a stand too, beside his job, he sell --

SL: He's got a stand at the Brewer's Stadium?

SM: At the Stadium.

SL: What is it, just -- hats and that type of thing

SM: Gifts.

SL: Do you ever go to the ball game?

SM: Sure, sure. The reason I know baseball, because I use to take Michael, and you tell me it was football, again I don't know the game as well, but baseball I know, because when he was young, I use to take him to the stadium.

SL: What about your daughters? What are their names and when were they born?

SM: Matilda. Deedee, we call; Matilda is her name, Deedee for short. She is working at Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance.

SL: She's here in Milwaukee?

SM: Sure, she is expecting, too, she be a mother too, in April.

SL: When was she born?

SM: [To wife:] Thelma, what's the birth date for Deedee? June 17? June 26, 1952.

SL: And what is her married name?

SM: Ugent, remember when I told you, Ugent Furs. A salesman.

SL: What's her husband's first name?

SM: Rodney.

SL: And what about your other daughter?

SM: Marsha, she is the one in school in Canada, in Toronto.

SL: What is she studying?

SM: Child psychology. She's got her Master's and now she going for her Doctorate degree.

SL: Do you remember her birth date?

SM: January 18, 1955.

SL: Is she married?

SM: She be married, the wedding will be in August this year.

SL: She's engaged. What's her fiancé's name?

SM: It is a boy from Canada. Alan Steinberg.

SL: The rest of the questions now are questions that we ask everybody, same questions, about the family life, and I'll ask you some questions about when your children were younger, if you can remember those things. First of all, did you always speak English in the home with your children?

SM: Always, it was the only language they know. Not I know, they know.

SL: They don't speak Greek or Ladino?

SM: None, no.

SL: How much do your children know about your Holocaust experiences?

SM: In the beginning I use to tell them, you know, stories, but I don't like to keep repeating.

SL: Do you think if they hear these tapes that they'll know, or would have heard some of these stories from before.

SM: No details, no. I explain on the tapes, I use to tell them, give them excerpts.

SL: Do you think your children might have faced any problems in school because you didn't have any family here or background that was different than other parents?

SM: No, no.

SL: In comparison to other families do you see your family as being closer than other people's?

SM: No, we have good children, and we are close to each other. Even though we don't see each other, we call each other, we talk each other.

SL: Do you see, from what your experience of other families, do you think you might be closer than other families are?

SM: Average.

SL: Do you see yourself as a more concerned parent than other people?

SM: I do.

SL: Why do you think you are?

SM: Because I feel that's why I am living, I'm living for the family. If I didn't want a family, I'd be living myself like a robot, you know, one town to another and living the free life or something, but I want a family.

SL: When your children were young, what were your greatest concerns for them? Were you concerned about their health or their education?

SM: Right, both, both, education. And Michael, he wanted to start as a lawyer, you know, he didn't succeed, but again be grateful he's got a job, he's working and he's got his own home and he's gonna start a family, and they are good kids.

SL: Right now, who are your closest friends, are they mostly Jewish or non-Jewish?

SM: Non-Jewish. A mixture.

SL: Are there any survivors that you are friendly with?

SM: No. No, we don't. We use to have, they move. I use to have five families here.

SL: Were they all Greek?

SM: Yes, they move in California.

SL: Do you belong to any organizations of survivors?

SM: Here?

SL: Yes.

SM: The Newcomers Club but I don't go as often.

SL: The new American Club?

SM: The new American Club, no, I don't go.

SL: Do you belong to any organizations of Greek survivors?

SM: In Israel.

SL: Are you a member of that?

SM: Yes, but honor member. Honorary member. And my brother-in-law is the president of the Greek Survivors.

SL: What kind of contact do you have with American-born Jews?

SM: Besides what?

SL: Do you know them through Synagogue or?

SM: Right, a lot of people.

SL: Through Thelma?

SM: Through Thelma, friends of Thelma's, through the temple.

SL: Have any of them asked you about your Holocaust experience?

SM: Oh yes, sometimes, in the beginning they use to ask me.

SL: What was their reaction, what do you think they thought about it?

SM: Actually, they couldn't believe it was the truth, you know, that this happened. But after the truth came to the surface, everybody knew. [About photographer David Mandel] He's taking pictures?

SL: Yes, he's taking pictures of you.

SM: Inside?

SL: Yes, he's got a flash.

SM: He's taking pictures of me.

SL: He's taking some of your wife.

SM: My wife?

SL: Have you told many non-Jews about your Holocaust experience?

SM: Sure.

SL: What have their reactions been?

SM: If I meet with the Greek nationality, if he is an intellectual man, if he's intelligent, I tell, but if he is ignorant, I don't tell them I'm a Jew. Most of them don't know there are Jewish people in Greece. I have other friends, I belong to the French Club.

SL: Here in Milwaukee?

SM: Here, yeah. We have a French Club.

SL: What is it, Alliance Francaise?

SM: No, it is not Alliance Francaise, it is mixture, Belgium, France, spoken French, even a lot of college kids there coming just to experiment to practice the language.

SL: How often do you meet then?

SM: Once a month.

SL: Just for an evening of speaking French?

SM: No, for entertainment.

SL: Do you go out with them, do you go to movies or out to dinner or something?

SM: No, no, we meet at the International Institute. International Institute, that's where once a month.

SL: I'm gonna have to stop the tape. Turn it over.

END OF TAPE 6, SIDE 1

TAPE 6, SIDE 2

SL: Historically, there has been an animosity between Eastern European Jews and Western European Jews. Did you ever experience that in Germany after the war? Or even during the war that you might have been looked down on you because you weren't a German Jew?

SM: The Polish Jews, in camp, did not accept us, did not accept us because we didn't speak Yiddish. We had different arguments about not spoke in Yiddish, and I used to ask them, "Okay, we don't speak Yiddish. We speak Hebrew [Ladino]. Do you speak Hebrew [Ladino]." They had no answer. Some of them yes, some of them no. But in general the Sephardic Jew is complete, not separate, but a different division from the Ashkenazic Jews. Even in Israel, different groups, different—even when you're *davening*,[20] the pronunciation is different, the way we read and the Ashkenazim. But I don't think there has to be a difference. You're a Jew, I'm a Jew — same thing. And I met fanatic German Jews in Germany in the camp after the — the way we were, still, Germany above all. They were fanatic Germans. I used to ask them, "Look who you are. Look what the Germans did to you." "No, we were good, we had good in Germany." The German Jews, they had good life. The majority were professional. In Poland, was people poor, and I was told stories in camp, that Polish Jews brought anti-Semitism in Germany. How much truth is, I don't know, but I do know they used to come in Germany doing some business and not to be honest with the merchandise. Cheating you or mispresentations, and the Germans didn't like this. But this is all, like the French say, mise-en-scène, just to have something to hang up with the anti-Semitism. The Germans they had in their mind -- did you see the movie the other day? -- the Jew, the capitalism, these are the money, and the rest of the people they have to be slaves to them. That's what they thought. It's wrong.

SL: You mention that you belonged to the French speaking group. Do you belong to any other clubs?

SM: No.

SL: No political clubs?

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[20]Yiddish for 'praying'.

SM: No.

SL: And you said the New American Club, but you don't go that often?

SM: No, don't go.

SL: What about your religious life? Do you go to synagogue?

SM: Holidays, always?

SL: When your children were growing up did you go to Synagogue and have the….?

SM: Oh yes.

SL: Did you celebrate holidays in the house?

SM: Oh yes.

SL: You do so now as well?

SM: Yes.

SL: Do you keep kosher?

SM: No.

SL: You light candles etc. and Passover?

SM: Like to see the [sounds like: sedera] I gave to my daughter. [pause in tape]

SL: Yeah, sure. Did your children go to Hebrew school?

SM: Yes.

SL: Was your son bar mitzvahed?

SM: Yes! But no bat mitzvah.

SL So they had a traditional, no bat mitzvah.

SM: We don't believe in it, no bat mitzvah.

SL: For the daughters?

SM: Girls, bat, no. But they went to Hebrew school.

SL: Do you think that your feelings about religion have changed since your Holocaust experiences?

SM: I try not. I try to hold the religion the same way my parents, you know, the memories. Like I told you, my mother was a real religious person and my father. And if I want a different life, easy life, I can stay in Germany and marry a non-Jewish German girl, and I would have to work in a factory all my life. They want me to stay in Germany and I say no. I didn't want to stay. I got a good friend, German, I met at Droster. He helped me through the correspondence [about restitution] in Germany. Every morning we get [inaudible]. He helped me, one day he came, "Sal, these Germans did some bad things to you people. I'd like to do something for you." He is the only one [German] who helped me. Which was good. But he's a fanatic religious man, he's Pentecostal. Pentecostal is a religion that came from the Greek word [Greek word]. [Greek word] is fifty. This man, no smoking, no swearing, no luxury in the house, and he adopted two children. He had no children. One day he asked me if I wanted to go in the church. They have a German church here, I went, he introduced me to the priest and everything, as a Jew and everything. And always he tried to change, say "Sal [inaudible]." He can change anything in me but not religion. There was one thing, you know, I was born as a Jew and I am gonna die this way.

SL: Could you describe to me a typical day in your life. Tell you what, you have this thing here where you've retired and now your are working half-time, so when you were working full-time what was your day like?

SM: Working everyday. Not only in the factory, I work in the house, to keep the house. That's what Thelma, she couldn't see me working in both places and she thought, we both thought, it would be better for me if, that's enough, I work for many years. Thirty years, working at the same job, in the tannery, and three tanners, like I explained to you before, one after another close out on me. And not one day I took a day compensation or stay home and from one job to another. When I was with Droster, they offered me food stamps and I told my children I am gonna go on food stamps, they don't want to eat. Say, "No, we are not eating this food." Okay, I don't get food stamps. They offer, you know, after they close the plant, they offer food stamps. But, you know, always I had some episodes, I was three times

in the hospital with my back, on the job I work [inaudible] because my back weak. I was in traction three times. But in general, my health, still even good health. I try to keep in good health. I don't smoke, I drink once in a while, but, you know, a beer. And I feel this is the way to keep you in good shape. I'm working, work don't kill me. People think work is against, no. I work all my life and I want to work, but I wanna work and do something I like to do.

SL: What types of things would you do in the evening to relax after you came home, after you had dinner, what would you do at night?

SM: After work, if I tell you, there was watching TV and I fall asleep because I was too tired. And in the morning, I use to work ten hours a day and two hours traveling, over two hours traveling I had.

SL: Over an hour each way?

SM: Each way.

SL: Where is the tannery?

SM: Way over on the South Side, and I transferred three times. Three times.

SL: Did you take the bus?

SM: I have no car. Three times I transferred. We use to get up in the morning still in the night, 4 o'clock in the morning, and I use to come home 6 o'clock.

SL: Do you have any hobbies or special interests?

SM: I, all my children's shoes myself, family, I fix myself. I have no machinery, you know.

SL: All your shoes?

SM: I can fix, I can fix all shoes, I fix. But not for a living, you know, you only get 50 cents an hour if you want to make a living. That's how much you make.

SL: Do you read very much?

SM: No. No. Very little.

SL: Do you get any newspapers or magazines at your house?

SM: Sure. Sure, we get the *Jewish Chronicle* every week and the *Journal* and magazines, sure. But I never start a book to read from the first page to the last page. I won't read.

SL: Just because you didn't --

SM: Too nervous, Too nervous.

SL: You don't like to sit down and take it easy? Have you ever read anything on the Holocaust? Have you ever read any books on the Holocaust?

SM: Sure, sure, but I don't like it, I don't like to read, what sense you read, you know? What's it gonna show me, what is it gonna tell me? I watched the movie, *Holocaust*.

SL: I was just going to ask you, what was your reaction to that? What did you think about that?

SM: Thelma, she's not in favor because, you know, after I watch, I can't sleep, I can't sleep and I get too nervous. My mind wanders then, but still I like to watch, I like to see, you know, how much reality they put in, I watch. I watch.

SL: Did anyone ask you about your experiences after the show had been on television, did people ask you about you experiences?

SM: I don't open the subject. I try to avoid it.

SL: Have you traveled much in Wisconsin?

SM: No.

SL: Does Milwaukee remind you at all of Salonika?

SM: In which way?

SL: In any way, is there any kind of connection that you make with Wisconsin and with Greece?

SM: No.

SL: Too different?

SM: No. Too different, even in France when I was, too different.

SL: Are satisfied with the cultural aspects of Milwaukee?

SM: Yes, yes.

SL: You feel that you have enough to keep you busy?

SM: Yes, yes.

SL: How much happier would you have been living in an area where there was a greater Jewish population?

SM: No, not exactly Jewish. If I was in [inaudible] of minority people, you know, when we come together we speak our mother language, we explain ourselves in Ladino, you know, it is a different thing, it is a different satisfaction when we talk. But not too like it, when I have this five times a year. And they moved, didn't like the weather.

SL: You didn't like the weather?

SM: I didn't like the weather.

SL: How long ago did they move?

SM: Oh, one they move 10 years ago, another one was 8 years ago, and the last one was a year ago. Was a mother and a daughter, her son is still here. They got a sister in Los Angeles, California. And she decided, she sold the house here, what was the story, she had worked, her husband was no good, and she went back to Greece, and left and the children agreed, you know, better live without a father, he was not a good father. And then we were, then we corresponded, The daughter she is going now with an Israel boy and in California. She is a nurse.

SL: How do you feel about living in Wisconsin with its high percentage of ethnic Germans?

SM: This don't bother me. No.

SL: What effort have you made to acquaint yourself with Wisconsin history?

SM: If I have made any effort?

SL: Have you learned anything about Wisconsin history, through your kids or something in school? Did you ever learn anything about the state?

SM: We went to Madison, we see the state, you know, but not too many other. No.

SL: When I asked you before, where you traveled, you said you didn't do too much traveling. But you went to Madison?

SM: Oh, yes, Chicago, Madison, yes, yes.

SL: How do you feel that you have contributed to Wisconsin?

SM: I like Wisconsin, this is a nice place to be and with nationalities, like you said before, with the Germans, they don't bother me. You know, I don't even put in my mind what kind of nationality it is. The way they respect me, the way they treat me, I treat the people.

SL: Do you feel that you've given Wisconsin the things, you know, of yourself, how do you think you've given Wisconsin something of yourself?

SM: Through my experience in leather?

SL: Well, you know. Some people say I pay my taxes, you know.

SM: Pay my taxes, that very helpful, you know. No special, nothing more special.

SL: Do you feel an obligation to Milwaukee or to Wisconsin for having given you an opportunity to have this kind of life?

SM: What kind of obligations? I don't think so. No.

SL: What was your reaction when the Nazi party was planning a march in Milwaukee?

SM: Real furious. Real furious, and Thelma, you know, she stop me, because, you know, she knows the type of person I am. If I be in connection, like close, you know, another type, I be in real trouble.

SL: She was afraid that you might physically get involved?

SM: Yes, physically.

SL: How satisfactory do you find the American system of government to be?

SM: I think it is one of the best country, the freedom, the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, and very, they don't stop you, if you want to be all day in temple they don't stop you to go. There's nothing, maybe, [inaudible], like the Russian people, why do you live there? Very happy, there was nothing in Russia, but against the religion. Did I tell you about the Russian I met in the Jewish Center? You know,

the group of Russian Jews, learn English and decide to meet in the morning. Another group, going to work, I don't know where they work, but these women, I can't understand, the makeup, you know the masquera, all the time, from the time we go inside the building from the time I get out, still the masquera inside.

SL: They're painting?

SM: They're painting, painting.

SL: The Russian women?

SM: Yes, Russian women, I know they are Russian because they speak in Russian. I wish I knew a few words, because I liked those people. I don't speak a single word in Russian.

SL: How do you feel about the prominence of Jews in American society?

SM: Nationality or religion?

SL: Do you think that Jews are too visible in American society? There are too many people seeing them in positions of authority?

SM: Yes, the jealousy.

SL: Are you worried about that?

SM: No. Why should I?

SL: What do you see as the most important issues facing America today?

SM: You mean with the new president we have, the elections, everything?

SL: Yes, anything that you feel is real important problem in America?

SM: I feel very encouraged we have made some progress with Begin and the peace between Egypt and Israel. There is something for years nobody achieved something like this. I don't know if it is not expected of some people but I feel there is something. It is better to be, to have them friends then enemies. I wish we could do something with Arafat, because there won't be peace if we don't do something, they have to give something, they have to come together.

SL: To what extent do you believe that there is anti-Semitism in the United States?

SM: There is, there is. You know, Hebrew, [speaks in Hebrew]. You don't have to say this, but anything that is non-Jew, you know, still you got something inside, about, you know, a little jealously, or a little think you can be what somebody else has, you can't have it, what somebody has got. This what considered is anti-Semitism. You agree? No?

SL: Well [laughs]

SM: What you think? What you think is anti-Semitism? Why then anti-Semitism in the world is? Why? Why do people --

SL: Obviously these people are insecure.

SM: The ignorance is above all. Like I said before, an ignorant, you know, you don't know the difference, from one to another, and we think, you know, "*The Jew*!"

SL: How secure do you feel as a Jew in America?

SM: I don't put even it in my mind. I don't know nothing about it. The day, if anything comes, I am prepared. I won't be [inaudible] when I pass, but I don't wish my children, you know, what I went through. You never know, you never know what's gonna be.

SL: Are you talking about that could happen here?

SM: It can happen any place, anywhere, right. They never thought this gonna happen, what Hitler did. The people of your generation, you know, they have to keep it in mind. You never know.

SM: What are your feelings about Germany and present-day Germans?

SL: Some of the young generation, after the war, they tried to show the friendly ways, our -- to repay or to be friends with the Jews. Some of them, you know, when you was in Israel, a lot went to the kibbutz and they help. Some of them are shameful of what their parents and grandparents did. But not all. There is still something inside them, you know, underground, you know, the anti-Semitism.

SL: You mentioned to me that you got restitution from Germany.

SM: Right.

SL: Are you still receiving that?

SM: Yes, yes.

SL: So it is an ongoing thing?

SM: Yes.

SL: Have you ever returned to Greece?

SM: No.

SL: No desire to?

SM: Not only desires. I were a lot in Greece. I have a lot in Greece, besides a lot, I have a house from my aunt. Nobody survive, so it belong to me. I wrote, I send the attorney power, [but] some declare that I was dead. They declare me, you know. I don't know who did this, I mean, who took power of my lot, who took power of the house and my aunt. I don't know. And I don't want to go over there, because I'm in trouble.

SL: You would be in trouble? Why?

SM: If I tell, the guy has builded on my lot, he's got a building and I tell him, you know, this is my lot. Doesn't pay. I have lawyers and they didn't do nothing. But still in [sounds like: Stawp] I have another lawyer in Athens and to him I write, if he can do something, but the guy I had in Greece do nothing.

SL: Have you ever been to Israel?

SM: No. I wish.

SL: Do you think it is easier for you to talk about your experiences now than it might have been 5 years ago?

SM: No. Not easy.

SL: Not easy?

SM: Not easy.

SL: How do you feel about an increasing awareness in this country about the Holocaust?

SM: Keep on showing the people, to remember, to remind. It is a good thing, because some people think you know, oh, we have to show Holocaust again, and this and this. You know, if you let everybody

know, it is a blessing. You share, keep on repeating, to remind the people. I feel in school, they have to [inaudible], not to live and die.

SL: How do you feel about the fact that part of the funding for this project is coming from the federal government?

SM: It does? It's nice. Very nice. The government, you know, I think President Carter helped a lot. Real nice.

SL: I have one more question. Why do you feel it is important to participate in an oral history project? You wrote to us and said you wanted to do it. Why did you feel it was important?

SM: Because in the future, you know, something, from one generation to the others, they have to know what the past history was. When they gonna hear from my boys, what I went through, and I tried to tell you my experience, maybe my recorder is not too good and spoken, but still I tried to tell you to the best of my knowledge, the way I remember, and everything is nothing but the truth, I told you. It is nothing to exaggerate or maybe I skip partial things more little details, I don't remember, but the main thing I told you. This make me happy that I met you and we had a generous talk, and maybe one day my grandchildren will have a chance to learn.

SL: Do you have anything else that you want to add, any additional comments?

SM: No, I thank you. Thank you and I'm real appreciate of the conversation we had. And hope that serve the purpose for the future, for the new and old generations. What they gonna learn the truth. And I hope this is something that never happen again.

SL: I want to thank you very much.

SM: Hope it never happen again, never again.

END OF TAPE 6, SIDE 2

END OF TRANSCRIPT