

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Solomon Radasky
January 23, 1995
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Solomon Radasky, conducted by Randy Goldman on January 23, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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Solomon Radasky January 23, 1995

Q: If you would please tell me your name, where you were born, when you were born?

A: My name is Solomon Rodashinsky. I was born and raised in Poland, in Warsaw. My birthday is May 17, 1910. All my life I was in Warsaw, the whole family. I come from eight people, six children, three girls and three boys and my father and my mother and the rest of the family, my father's side was six brothers and three sisters. My mother's was two sisters and three brothers, so we had a big family. Over there, I figured out after the war how many people is alive, I never find it to now nobody. I was looking in papers, conventions, I was going in 1981 and in 1993 the Washington D.C. and then in 1985 in Philadelphia. There was a convention I ever missed, _____ I advertised through the radio, through the television, through the _____. Still now I get some papers from the _____, they ask me to find somebody and until now I never saw a person pointing their finger saying I know you. There was 78 people including nieces, nephews, all of the family, and I'm the one alive. I ask myself many times why, why am I alive? But, maybe God leave it me to be alive to sometime say the way I am and what I am and that's it. Then in 1940 Yom Kippur day, it comes out they're going to make a ghetto and that ghetto don't take too long from Yom Kippur to November 15, everybody had to come out and where to find a room. It was very hard. Some people never let in, but later on they did it because the Jewish section around Warsaw was around and we found a room of less in _____, the street. But there was on the _____ one room, six people, my mother, my father, three sisters and I who were the six. I think one of my brothers there. We sleep on the floor and the winter time -- and Europe's winter time is not like here, a little day like yesterday morning you say oh it's cold. I say it's cold too, because I'm already 45 years here in the United States, but the life was very, very hard. Until they come into the ghetto. The ghetto was so terrible, people were laying in the streets. Mostly the people were coming around from around the small towns behind Balsa. The Germans throw out and make it the third _____. The third _____ means any people can't live around in this town, the third _____. People with little children, they're in the street every morning we saw the dead in the corner. When the Jewish commander _____, that means people would come and pick up the dead people in little hand trailers and bring that to the cemetery and the cemetery had no place. They made big, big holes and they put in 100 to 200 people and they covered it. No food. So, when I'm talking about, I see the picture from my eyes what happened there. There was a young guy, his name was Rubinstein. He was no crazy, he made it crazy. He was running around in the streets, I have to say a few words in Yiddish what he said _____, that means we're all the same and the fat get off, so it's no one higher than the other one. And he knows to who to go and ask for money. You got a cat, give me money. Give me five _____, like you say here five dollars and if you're going to give me I'm going to holler _____ and we got scared. Everybody give him, he got a full cap with money, he go around in those sections with the poor people laying in the street with their children and take the money and throw it, _____ and they grabbed the money and bring the money again, just money. He

helped those poor people in the street. This was not help too, of course. There come a time 1942, July 22, the _____ about 2 o'clock signs in the street who wants to go to work and get two bread. Our bread at that time, our bread is not like you got it here, a pint, a bread is a kilo. A kilo is close to two and half pounds. People pushed one into the other one. Everybody like to be the first to get the bread. The first transport as 20,000 people. They don't know where they're going. Nobody don't know but the president and the Jewish commander his name was _____. He hid a man, a Pollock and he paid him money to follow the trains with 20,000 people and that Pollock took that money and never came back. The next day he did the same thing. He gave another Pollock the money and follow it. He never came back, but Treblinka is not too far from Warsaw, is 120 kilometers is like 80 miles. The third day comes a young man blonde, he never looked like a Jew and he took off his arm band and put on a cap like the Pollocks used to wear with the leather, and he said 80 years old the guy is, all but 6'2" tall and he said I risk my life. I'm going to follow that train and I'm coming back. I don't want no money and I'm coming back and I'm going to see what's going on and he followed and he was coming back and it was told Mr. _____ this and this place, Treblinka is a crematorium. The people coming down in the trains is no selection like they make selections in other camps, it is no selection they tell them to get off their clothes and they tell them they're going in to take a bath, and they cut off their hair, everybody, the men, the women and they shave their heads and they're going in a shed, they close the door, outside in the corner there is a man who brings down the switch. They bring down the switch and it pumps gas. He heard that and the people were hollering, children crying and a while later, he said they come in and they're taking out little hand trailers, put it down and bring that to the crematoriums put them in the ovens. He told this, Mr. _____, when I speak many times about this, I tell their story. To me the men did a big mistake. He's supposed to say for the public what's going on. There's no where to go any way, what you know. He did it. He called his whole family, brothers, sisters, brother-in-laws, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces to his house and closed all the windows, the doors, and put in all the ovens the gas, and they killed themselves. The next morning we find it out with a note what this is and they're all dead. They're dead, nobody can take their life. They come in and take that way and they were going the same way the others were, the same way. That time, the organizations the _____ communists other _____, allies got together and seen to protect what they can protect. _____ but Pollocks used to come in the ghetto, they don't suppose they smuggle in themself. One bring a few potatoes, one bring a bread, and he asked you want a suit. We give him our suit and they give us bread. Whatever he wanted, we give him. He asked not for money and the people got clothes and they got in contact with the Polish side only risk was some of them take the money and they bring a gun and they bring a rifle. They bring some bullets. Some of them say no send me the money. How can we send the money. There was little children, 8, 10, 12 that break the fence from the ghetto, it was a brick fence and the evening as soon as it's getting a little dark those children were going over on the other side smuggling. They used to buy some bread, potatoes, carrots. Early in the morning, six o'clock in the morning when we can walk and get daylight, they're coming back. With their children we're sending all the money and they send the ammunition and they bring ammunition and many times if they send the children through the canals, the drains in the street, the drains in the street was dry because when

they used no water, there was nothing to cook so there was no water. It should have gone through the drains and canals in the street to the other side and bringing in bottles with gasoline, and we make bombs. Fill a bottle with gasoline and cover it with a piece of rag that's coming out and light and throw and this was a bomb.

Q: Were you involved with this?

A: No.

Q: But you knew about it?

A: I know that, but I would have been but I know that. Not everybody was to know that, but I know that. I was even maybe three kilometers, three kilometers is over two miles because my shop was in a different street and as so we got organized from bombs, ammunition, hand grenades, rifles, you know, and the time was coming. I was a _____. The Germans got two shops. One shop was the name Schultz and one shop was Terbantz. I was in Terbantz, three kilometers away, let's say like three miles. One day a guy came and said he saw my sister by Schultz. I say you're sure. He said you know I know your sister, the youngster. I said yes, and I say how can I go over and see? I'm locked up here, I cannot go out on the street. He said I was coming with a German and I'm going to stay there over night and if you want he's going to take you and he's going to bring you back, but it's going to cost you 500 marks, like \$500. I say okay, I give him the money and he introduced me to the German and the German tied my hand with a piece of string in the bag and I'm in front of him and they're behind me with the rifle and he bring me over there to Schultz. I come over there and he give me the address and I look and my sister is not there. I asked people that I used to know and some of them said yes she was working today. Some said they didn't see her in a few days. I can never find her. It's coming five o'clock I have to go back and the German soldier said to me we cannot go back. I cannot come back. I said why? He said you don't know? I said no what is? You bring me to the gate, to the fence, he said look out, do you see what there is? I said yes I see man soldiers there around this is what tomorrow morning. I said what do you mean tomorrow morning. He said all the Juden are going to be dead tomorrow morning. This was the 18th of April.

Q: What year?

A: 1943, I stayed over night as soon as daylight was coming in the morning we hear a song. The Germans opened the gate and come in in the ghetto and singing that song all the Jews are going to be dead today. We looked down there and we see in the meantime comes out three soldiers, officers, the lieutenant, a captain and looking like the Germans were walking with their hands in the boots and their head high and stopping. They stopped and one from the three asked the leader of the group where are you going. We're going to kill all the Jews. You got a paper to show something. We don't know nothing. No, we don't have nothing. The major is outside. They turn around and come back they don't know nothing. They turn around and go back they started to fire. Fire was coming out where the building I was

before, demolished, half from the bombs. See nobody in that time we killed all but two hundred soldiers inside. The Jews started the uprising April 19 and I was there because I was not going back. Hundreds were probably killed but the Germans saw that we be strong, but one thing we never got, we didn't have no airplanes or they're throwing out higher bombs. They got that. They started throwing out the bombs with the fire bombs and this was about six weeks we were fighting. May 1st was quiet in the morning and I was going out taking a look and I got a shot in my right ankle. See my right ankle, I got the shot right there, through here. One German saw me I fall down. He was coming with the rifle. He hollered stand up and I had to stand up _____, they bring me to the _____, you know what the _____ is? No more _____ now. I come to the _____, the train is mostly full already with people to go to Treblinka. Well, they pushed me and they throwed me in. I come to Treblinka. That train stopped they say they can not the 20,000. They can take half. They took the half but my luck I wasn't out of sight. I was going to Maidonek.

Q: Did you at this time know anything about Treblinka?

A: Yes, I told you before there president _____

Q: Yeah, but you said he didn't tell anybody?

A: He left a note. He left a note and then killed himself and his family and left a note about Treblinka. That's how we find it out.

Q: So you knew what Treblinka was?

A: Yes. They cut the train in half and I was going to Maidonek.

Q: When was this?

A: 1943, May 1. I was in the ghetto until May 1. From the 18th to May 1st.

Q: Can I just go back a second?

A: Yes.

Q: During the few weeks of the beginning of the uprising in the ghetto, what were you doing? Just hiding?

A: Everybody was hiding. Special people that organized to do something there because they were scared. They were scared to trust, maybe spies, civil spies, Germans. Even they know me, no we have no place for you to help. When we need you we'll call you. There was organized. They were fighting six weeks. When the war started German met Poland not even less two weeks. Why? Because there was spies, give over the telegrams to the Germans

where to find the bombs, where there were houses, and where the railroad tracks and everything, not even two weeks, and they fight us, they fight six weeks. Then the history and the war, the six weeks they give up many, I was in Balsa two years ago and I seen in _____ a tombstone but it stood where he used to live _____ Street. My wife used to live on that street. I saw that tombstone, and it is written in Hebrew and in Jewish and in Polish, his name. My wife used to know the man.

Q: How did you know where to hide? Where did you hide?

A: Like I say before, I was lucky. All my family dead, I'm the one alive. There were many people that survived the _____. There was no place to go. We go into the bunkers. There were many bunkers. There were bunkers made onto the ground. From one street to the other one for two miles and the Germans found them out and they destroyed the bunkers with the people. We can never find the people later. It was _____ to go out _____. When I got and that was on the ground, those bunkers from all the way from street to the other one and they find it and they throw bombs there. The whole Warsaw is destroyed, 85 percent destroyed. I was there two years ago and I don't want to go there. My daughter used to bother me to go and I _____ when I was coming there to _____ Street and I take a look inside. I didn't want to go no further, not one house. Everything is destroyed and the barracks the Russians put up barracks four or five floors and the Pollocks come, there never was so many Pollocks there and they got in the millions there not in the thousands, in the millions in the street so many cars, they park in the sidewalk, they park in the cars. I was coming to Maidenek.

Q: Okay, I was just wondering if you could tell me a little bit more about your life before the war, so can we just go back and then we'll get to Maidenek. When you were living in Warsaw, I want to know a little bit more about your family life. You weren't married before the war?

A: Yes.

Q: Oh, you were married. When you went into the ghetto your wife was with you as well?

A: She was, not too long. She was all the time with me until 1942 to _____. One day it was in September and October was a selection and they took out all the people plus the people that were in the shop. I was in the shop and that was in the house. It was supposed to be that people were in the house working the night shift and they want to know who took that evening. A man, a German officer, he was running the shop and he told the people from the night shift and they said you get us some others and they say I don't have it. They say that's your problem and took them, all of them to Treblinka.

Q: So, when you came home for work?

A: This was in the same building, they left ten minutes later all the shop we go down there and

saw nobody was there. Even was a lot of children was too. In Europe the houses are not like here. The houses are built in the ground a cellar and then build up the houses and we put together a few cellars and we hid over there a woman which worked in the shop with children. On the other side, we put in some water to see when the commandant says something is broken from the pipes, water on it because you cannot get a plumber. But somebody who had a big mouth said on the other side there is a woman and children. We'd like to find it out and we can never find it out who did it there. Who did it there we just think it was the police.

Q: The Jewish police?

A: That's right. The police had a big mouth and that did it and those Germans knocked off that wall and there were people who were going out -- they had to close the water and they got wet and it was a very frozen day, and snow and they have to go through the water and walk through the _____. I think many, many was fall down there and it was a far way to walk to the _____ place where we were.

Q: Did you have any children at that time?

A: One child, two and a half years.

Q: When you were working at the _____ plant what kind of work were you doing?

A: We used to make jackets from lambskins like the _____ jackets, the short ones. We used to make lambskin jackets like that because Europe is very cold. Some jackets like this we used to make gloves and caps.

Q: Who were you making them for?

A: For the Germans. Everything was for the Germans. Every day so much had to be ready.

Q: Do you think because you were a furrier that this bought you time because you could work well for the Germans?

A: Yes, that's what saved me. They never touched the men from the shop, just they look in the houses, the private houses. We used to live in the same building.

Q: The same building you worked in?

A: Yes, the same building.

Q: So you couldn't go back to your home?

A: No, the same building. We never saw the street. In the morning when we're going out to the

shop or work at night they come down in the morning, six o'clock, six thirty in the morning I got back in my room, sleep until 3:00, 4:00 in the evening.

Q: I'm a little confused because you say when you first went into the ghetto you lived with your family and there were many people in one room?

A: Yes. They started the ghetto. This was in 1940. At that time there were no shops. In 1941, '42 they organized the shops, before they opened the shops we were scared to walk in the streets because they grabbed people in the street and some of them never came home. To clean the snow from the railroad tracks, work in the street, this started this was later. This started in 1942 when Treblinka opened up.

Q: How did people get chosen for work?

A: Well not everybody can get work. You have to be -- when you say you're a tailor you have to be a tailor. There was a tailor shop too. There was in the same street, but our shop was the furrier shop was a big university, a big building they make a tailor shop. When somebody registered a tailor is going in and working and he didn't know how to do something. He never come out, why he never come out was a man, a German. His name was _____, and he was coming mostly at night. He was coming and checking, not in the day. When somebody don't know how to work was working at night because the production was made in the day that people that were really tailors that know how to do it. I'm a tailor you know I work in the day and somebody's not, I make the production for him, for the man to be alive. And that _____, he used to come at night and he was I don't know how to call this man this, this man was a monster. You see, the material goes on the table laid down there about this high, maybe higher and they put it on a stencil and chalked around with chalk, where the sleeves, where the front, where the back and took hold of that. Usually you got electric scissors and cut it through there. There they got the knives. Put it on their knives and cut it straight in the chalk and cut it all through the material. That's very hard to do. That _____ used to have knives with him he took it and he used to know who was working and who was not. He used to come in and look and throw the knife straight in the chest. We used to know when he came we took some people bring them down in the bunkers and hide them. He was going to the bunkers and find them and kill them the same way, with the knives, thrown the knives in the chest. It was thrown.

Q: It must have been terrifying?

A: You have to know what you're doing. If you say you're a furrier or a shoe maker, fixes shoes, you got a lot of shops but you have to know the work. Somebody was going in there maybe he knows some people there to help him bring him in to save his life, his life was not sure the day or the night when he got killed. When he got out alive, he was lucky.

Q: Tell me a little bit about the ghetto life and the Jewish consul and all of that.

A: The Jewish consul there is nothing to say because nothing can help them. They're getting no help. Where can they get help. They never used to get help from nobody. They never used to get it. The people themselves had to help them. Like I said before, we risked our lives and we saw a common end in the ghetto. We asked them, you got a bread, you got a potato, come on I'll get you something. He say, what, I'd say I got pants, I got shoes, we give up our shirts, give up everything, give away, because we got some money but they didn't want no money. They got a lot of money before when the Germans occupied Germans in 1939, they robbed all the stores and there were some very beautiful stores, shoes, suits, ladies dresses everything, sections. They robbed right away. They come in the shop with the Germans, you there, he got this and this. Streets, _____, all of those business, nice ones, good ones. What kind of stores there were, everything sections. Not stores that got this, this and everything. Mens clothes is men's cloths. Men's shirts and underwear is men's shirts and underwear. They used to know. They used to come by. So, we had no help. You had to help yourself. You risk your life. We had to ask you come on give me a piece of bread give me a few potatoes. Just to make the day to be alive.

Q: Were you able to get over to the Polish side? Did you do that?

A: No, I didn't go on the Polish side. I had no business to go there because I know that I used to have was robbed. I bring with me a little bit, I sell there and whatever I can make, I make it.

Q: But that was for people who were coming in?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, life in the ghetto before you were at the shop all the time, tell me about it.

A: Life in the ghetto, I was going out in the street, they grabbed me to work. I was many time they take and grab me to clean up the snow on the railroad tracks and then they would come a day when I was coming back and I was luck to be coming back. I know the sections and how to handle it a little bit. Because I used to have some fur with me and carry it around. One time I sell a Pollock a little jacket, a seal jacket, and the Germans were a way and a few weeks later they arrest him in front of the police they ask him where he got it. He told my name; he told my address. When I come home in the evening two policeman one a policeman and one a civilian, wait for me and they arrest me. I said for what. They said come on. I come up to the police station and first of the civilian started to beat me and he said in Polish, they said you dirty Jew. I say for why, why are you beating me. Tell me what you want. I did nothing wrong because first of all I'm scared and I don't know if I'll come out alive or not. I want to know. He said you sold a seal jacket to a man, where did you get it. I said let me see if it's mine or not. Yes, I sold it because that was my wife's and I got that little child and they have nothing to eat and I sold that and I didn't sell it for money; I sold it for bread. He bring me two breads and some potatoes. I can recognize mine because I make them. Then he give me a paper with a pencil, I want you to move it down there how you can

recognize your work. I wrote down I can look down inside the lining, what kind of lining it was and I take the paper with the pencil and I wrote down that the lining is made so on and so on to look nice. He brings it in, and I said this is not mine. This is not mine. He said it's yours. I said it's not mine. You told me to write down to give you how it was made and now I got the paper and look if that's the same thing or not. Well, he started to beat me again. He said I want 500 slotas. I said I don't have it with me. I can bring it tomorrow. He said if you don't bring me tomorrow you're going to be dead. I'm coming out and I'll arrest you and you'll be dead. I said okay, but give me a pass to pass the gate when the Germans stand. He write me down, he said 12:00 you be here then I will wait outside by the gate for you. It was a nice day and I will bring you 500 slotas and that's how I was free.

Q: So this policeman was a Jewish policeman?

A: No, Polish. The Jewish policemen were inside in the ghetto. There was a big man. I'll never forget him. My _____ got killed through a Jewish policeman. 1942 in April he's gone to the wall with the children coming back and they brought our bread and our Jewish policeman saw that and he called the German and says stop that Jew he's got our bread that little boy. What happened to that little boy, I don't know. I think they killed the little boy too. He shot them in the back. He shot them. In 1941, wa a time to give away all fur coats, all the gold, all the diamonds, whatever somebody had. We give away and one day I come from work I come in the house and I see my mother and two sisters dead. They took Riena, they wear black uniforms going door to door around and seeing them coming in and ask to give the furs or gold or whatever and they said they didn't have it, they give away to the Jewish commander. They didn't want to believe this to they look to see if they can find it, and they killed my mother and two sisters. They killed them in the house.

Q: Through who?

A: Through the Jewish police. The Jewish police were showing them where to go, which houses.

Q: Were they ever helpful?

A: To who? They were helpful to themselves. They were helpful to themselves, not to nobody. Many people got killed in there.

Q: Was the Jewish consul any better?

A: To tell you the truth, I don't know who was the Jewish council. We never got nothing to help them. Nobody send in to the ghetto to help, which consul send in? No consulate. The whole war, nobody helped us nothing.

Q: What I was asking is I thought there was a Judenrot.

A: The Judenrot did nothing but for themselves. If they got us something, they took away for themselves. That's all. They never helped nothing. I don't know from where they get the help, from where they get the help. The United States never helped nothing. The other consulates, which consulate can help there, but not the United States.

Q: I read that in the Warsaw Ghetto, at least in the beginning there was a lot of activity. There was a lot of schools and concerts?

A: That was special made for the Germans. They make some concerts. They took the nicest cafeterias and tell people to get dressed nice to come in and bring some _____. They're playing, dancing and to show them the Jews in the ghetto, look how they're living, and this was propaganda. This was lies. It was propaganda. You read, there was propaganda from the Germans.

Q: So the Jewish community didn't organize their own programs?

A: The Jewish community never got nothing to organize. I remember not I remember, I saw with my own eyes a man get a way a hole in the lining, the material, that time they're going to buy before the war in normal time, it costs maybe 2,000 slotas and 2,000 slotas was a lot of money. In side there, at that time, he give away free bread, a Pollock did, he wanted somebody to buy it he can give 5,000 slotas. It was no help.

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

Q: What else can you tell me about life in the Warsaw Ghetto?

A: What I can tell you?

Q: Every day life, what you did?

A: What I did, the same thing. We just hoped to be at the end to get out of there. We were thinking, every day it just got worse and worse and worse until it comes the end. The end was to get out of the ghetto. 1943, April 19 when it was the Warsaw ghetto uprising. That was the end.

Q: Before that was there regular selections or deportations?

A: This was something everybody was hiding, not to go and get caught. Somebody get caught and they're never coming back. I thought yesterday _____, he showed me a number which is close to mine. I got a number 128,232 he got 128,203, you know very short, but I asked him when you got the number. He told me he was coming one day before the Auschwitz, and from where, he was in 1940. In 1940 they grabbed him on the street. They grabbed people on the street like they sometimes come and get dogs on the street. Someday like that and they send him away. He told me where he was. He was a hundred times dead and he was coming out and then he was coming the same time the Auschwitz driver was coming.

Q: Were there class distinctions? Did some people live better than others in the ghetto?

A: No. I used to have a home with three bedrooms. Three bedrooms is a six room house. That I have to give up five rooms for people. And you can imagine how they live in the ghetto when I've got a house with six rooms and I have to give up five rooms for people, and people bringing in their own people and they lay in the street and then they take our bed and change their clothes. The life was very, very terrible for us.

Q: Was your house, your house before the war was in the area where the ghetto was?

A: No, no. I had to give up the house and go into the ghetto. Give up the house and give up everything, not even the old clothes I had. I left them. I used to have a _____, I watched my daughter two years ago and see them in Poland and I saw what the Pollocks robbed a mahogany desk and I told her see I used to have a _____ like that. I used to have a bedroom and a living room, furniture like this. The whole world you cannot see furniture like that mahogany furniture.

Q: So you had a nice life before the war?

A: I was good off. I used to have a Polish girl in the house when the Germans were coming in and she was going down the _____, a young girl, very beautiful, and talked to her and she said she worked for a Jew and she knew where they are hiding some _____ in the cellar. She bring them in and they come in with the truck and they took out everything and I had to run away. I ran eight kilometers. I stayed there for three days and then I was coming back. I was lucky that I got a shot when I was running. The bombs the bullets everything falling. See, there was nobody to trust. Nobody to trust, especially you thought them to be the police they want to show off who they are. This was the trouble. Maybe it would be a little better. Maybe it would be better to get something more to eat, but of course the Pollocks were coming in and they wanted to help, only they wanted something. They were robbed themselves. When we go out after the -- the 19th of April I saw there's nobody there from our family and then I was coming from concentration camp. I was coming from Maidonek with my leg and I got a bed, I laid down I see a man comes over to me and asks me the way I came. He saw the limp and I showed him my leg and I told him he said I can help you but I cannot help you with no medication. I said well, first do what you can. First I am a doctor, and he took it out a little pocket knife. He took it out and he operated on the leg there. I was lucky they give me a shot, it was a long time, he said this is going to help you and he helped me cut it up and make bandages but I had no medicine, no medication nothing. But I say I can do it. Help yourself, I said what can I help myself, excuse me the next person say you _____ and that's going to help you. The next morning we go out to the appell 5:30 in the morning and I look around and I see a few guys I used to know and they tell me everything and they said how can you walk out of the gate. When they see you limp they'll take you out. When they take you out they're going to hold you until the evening when we all are coming back, and you see the kitchen there, yes, they're going to be hanged. I'm in trouble again. Well, I say, one says okay, come on then in the middle. He moved out one and you stay in the middle and we're going to try, we'll go close to you and we're trying to cover you. And they'll try it, and I walked out and I was coming back the same way. What was the trouble outside? Outside was the most trouble than the inside. We gathered the wooden shoes there, and we come outside we had to take off and got the two holes in the bag, one got a piece of string to pull it back together and put it on the left shoulder, not the right, the left shoulder and walking backward and they grab you. They grab your coat, the skin -- many people found and they shot them and put them on the side and when we're walking back, we have to bring back the dead, carry back the dead because by the appell in the morning they count out 200 that they are coming back 200 the same way, dead or alive, bring them back. The end of the day I get better in the leg. It was nine weeks in Maidonek.

Q: Now were you working every day with this bad leg?

A: Yes, I go to work outside in the fields.

Q: Like digging?

A: Digging and we were bringing out some trash. It was very, very dirty work. Dirty work like

dirty work, but to be nine weeks not to have my shirt to change, not to get a bath, nothing. Excuse me for my expression but the lice, it was terrible. Not just from me, we had 1,500 people in that barrack all of the same. Until when I was out on the 22nd of July he come, an SS man and took it out three groups 750 people, where are we going, we don't know. We were glad to get out of Maidonek. Maidonek was the worse concentration camp there ever was, and Maidonek is in history the worst concentration camp. They were talking yesterday, about Auschwitz and Birkenau, I didn't want to say nothing. Many people know that. It was written one time in the papers, in a magazine how Maidonek was the worst concentration camp in the history.

Q: Why?

A: They treat people worse than animals. They didn't need to kill people. People killed themselves. Rows and rows of _____, 29 factory from _____ and they had two boys that were Fins and they were with me in the same lodge and then were coming a young man, his mother and father were in the shop at _____ with me. He had a big _____. The name of the business was _____. Their two boys, the Fins, and his father and mother was in selection that took away when I explained before there that it was in the cellar where she was there. She was gone there. He obeyed the business with a building and that product was a good friend before the war and they say he's going to save him and his son. The son is going to Treblinka and I'll tell you about the daughter and he said yes. The 18th, the evening, he walked over from _____ and it wasn't to far. He risked his life he took off the _____, he took the boy and was going all the way to that _____. I was two weeks in Maidonek, I see the son is there. I ask him where is Daddy. I say Daddy, they took Daddy to _____. _____ is not far from Maidonek, a concentration camp. There were 35,000 people in _____ and Schultz there three months and that brings this rifle in there and they killed them in houses. 35,000 just shot like nothing. They took them up in the shop and they killed 35,000 people. My wife's brother was over there too in Schultz shop and I asked him where's Daddy and he said Daddy's going to _____. That guy and the two twins hanged themselves in barracks, the same night they took out the bells. Two young boys and an 18 year old boy. The older three they hanged themselves.

Q: Did you see them?

A: Yes, they bring them out in the morning to the appell to the counting. 1,500 people in one barrack and dead to live everybody had to be counted out the same day and then we go out to work. People got killed we had to bring them back and lay down there and they have to come, the dead. When I was out, when the SS men took the three groups, the 750 people and my group was staying and I didn't make the five and I was in the second 100 and the second 50 the officer there was an appell that come to seek out a big holes. I remember now when I look at the holes. A black holes with a white striped nose and the legs have, all of her legs have white and he was lighting the hose around her everyday by the appell. When the officer took us and we would stay separate, the other two groups he took away the same

thing. One group is gone and digging stones and the other group is gone making ammunition. Only he was looking and see he comes over and colors dogs, why he colors dogs, because they were wearing metal numbers on a piece of metal with a piece of string. I remember my number 993, I remember my number and he say do you smoke a cigarette and watch and tell me who smoked a cigarette and if not I'm going to hang dogs and I'll give you three minutes. We're not supposed to move nothing. A whole day in summer in July in the heat, no nothing, and we cannot answer nothing for three minutes. It took not three minutes. Started the whistle and bring out the bench with the robes and everything and he comes over and he got a whip like this with the silk that you throw on the animals. He gathered the first two fifths rivals. Nobody wanted to go first in the bench. No blind fold or nothing, they have to put on the rope themselves. I was in the first three. Turn around and we gathered the ropes. The rope was hooked in and to kick away the bench and the first three to be hanged. I muddle by and he hollered, the officer hollered halt, halt, that means stop. HE comes over and says what is that. Smoking a cigarette and they want to say we're hanging dogs. He said who is there dogs. A new group, 750 people. You're going to hang 10 dogs? I cannot carry ten dogs dead, turned them loose. He started beating, his type already to pull them out in their position to open them up. We're very excited, we don't know what to do. Well, we survived. He beat us but they come down there but we're supposed to stay the next morning but he took us the same night. He took us out to the railroad and we stayed in that train there and the next morning we left, a day and a night and we was coming to Auschwitz. We were coming to Auschwitz and we see coming in _____, the sign is still there. I saw that two years ago. Well, the 750 he made the selection and he took it out 300. What was the 300, the 300 was already, they were not able to work. There was frozen, the face, the legs, they can't walk. People run in, he never saw them. He said 150 they started to go and everybody wanted to get out of Maidonek. He bring some soldiers with machine guns and it's in Auschwitz they called it the Birkenau. Over there they killed 300 people. No gas chamber, no shower, no nothing just like that.

Q: How did they kill them?

A: With machine guns, and took them away.

Q: Tell me about your arrival at Auschwitz?

A: Well I arrived at Auschwitz, the first thing I was glad to be over there. Yes, I'll tell you why. I got other clothes an I was going to get a shower and a shirt and underwear. A little more in Maidonek, I'd hang myself too. You can't even get to the toilet in the morning. Terrible, so that camp I never saw all that many but this one was worse. When I was coming to Auschwitz I can go in and they cut off my hair and I get shower and wash me up. Once in nine weeks, ten weeks, I feel like I'm newly born. But later on, I got some problems. This was a difference. I got some problems. I was the first job was I was digging potatoes from the ground where they cover them for the winter, not to get them frozen. I had all the bad ones that were frozen were going for us. The good ones were going for the SS. That's what they tell me. If you didn't find one good potato between there, you'd be hanged, that's all. I

was working there a few weeks. The second a few months, after there from every Sunday I can be shaved. If I'm not shaved until 12:00 I get no soup. I have to be shaved, my face has to be shaved until 12:00 and 12:00 they're bringing out the soup. Any man not shaved cannot get it. You have to be shaved to get a little bit of soup. If not I'd have to wait until Monday 12:00. Sunday evening if you're working you get Sunday evening a little piece of bread. If you're not working you get nothing, just 12:00 the soup. The barber was a barber like me. He says he's a barber. He got a knife and cut it. From the water, the water was not clean and I got an infection. I got an infection but they stopped me and one time took me out of the line and I was going to the hospital. I stayed in the hospital maybe eight ten days but I was lucky the men there was in the hospital he gave me a little mirror he said that's one thing that can help you. You're not going to get another one. You can die here and you're not going to get another one. Be careful because I want this back. You pull out of the hair as much as you can. Pull out and then the infection will be better and take a little water and I was sitting for days and pulling out hair by hair and that's what helped. I was six or seven days in the hospital. Then I was coming out, I got another job another block, block six. Block six, I come out and I see some people coming from work and some young guys where they used to come in 1942 _____ was not finished. Behind in the _____ 76,000 that number and one comes over to me and asks me where are you from and I told him and they said oh tell me about the Warsaw ghetto uprising and I told him all that I can, how we were fighting in there and he brings another two guys, he brings over and the one asked me where, I told him what are you doing. Do you know some people in that business, I said yes. _____ they say yes and I called them by their name, and when I said I called them by their name no one believed me. He said their name, how did you call me, I said yes I tell them how they called them. I told him when I saw him on the last day in that I told him that guy is going he got the left ear, he was born with that little piece that was hanging down and he said how did they call him by his nick name, I said they call him _____ because of his ear. When I saw this, I got one in a way in a side and got a piece of bread this size. One bring me a soup but it was cold. It was good soup. One of them ask me one of the piece of paper where they give you you are going to work. I have to go into block two tomorrow morning 5:30 in the morning. I see the piece of paper, I don't want you going over there. I said why. You're going to be going into a coal mine. Yesterday I met a man who was working in that coal mine. He was working in a coal mine, and he is -- and they say no you're not going, and I say if I'm not going I'm going to be hanged. He said nobody is going to hang you. Give me the piece of paper. He pulled it down and went away to the kapos and talked to the kapos. He had the connection with their friends in their own town. They was working and they can organize something and they bring in the kapos, the kapos they changing, the kapo was for their job was not _____ are criminal. A young man, 6'6" tall who weighed over 300 pounds. The face when you look into his eyes you don't know him, he's a murderer. He was the kapo of us. But this room where I was and that boy is make him good. Then he saw something he don't like you he killed that boy right now. I saw one time he took a guy when they used to come and he took a shovel and hit him in the head and he killed him. He reported it that somebody ran away and nobody can say that it is lie. Everybody won't say they were lying. The kapo is telling, take him, let the commandant in the morning and I was scared. I was

how I can go out to pass the gate when I got my numbers here. They said you come with us. We're going to save you. You going over there eight ten days you'll be dead. You cannot make it in a coal mine. They covered me and I passed in the morning and I come back in the evening and I was working the whole time until the end with those guys. My job was ten people we were digging _____ and bringing it to Birkenau twice a day and we covered the ashes. When the ashes were coming out from the crematoriums. The crematorium and in the back there was a little hole there and coming out the ashes and there was a big two holes to get out and we were covering them with the _____, we were covered with ashes. I showed my daughter the crematoriums in Maidonek and I showed her the ashes because in Birkenau you can't see, it's demolished everything. One crematorium is just a little bit there. You know it's a crematorium but you cannot see nothing. In Birkenau and Maidonek all the crematoriums and gas chambers is in Birkenau and I was showing her how the gas chambers and the crematorium where the people were going into the ovens and the ashes come out in the back and I was covered in Auschwitz.

Q: This was kind of a unique job. Can you remember what you were thinking as you did this work?

A: Yes, sure. When I wasn't going to another job, maybe I was there a long time because I got out of here and the boys were saved me. They saved me not to go into the coal mine. I know to myself if I was going to a coal mine I was going to be dead. The condition that I was, and that helped me. They gave me some kind of piece of bread. They give me some time a little soup.

Q: Were they working with you?

A: The same group, ten to fifteen people that were coming out there in the fields was divided. One time they come and they say you can make a cape for a kapo. I said yes, but I have no material, I have no needle. I need a needle and thread and scissors. You go and get everything and when they bring me there and I say to one, look I have to take the measurement to make the cape. But I was scared to go up and talk to him. He said don't worry. I will take the measurement. I said I have no tape but I can take a piece of paper and take it around and that's what I need. We come out to work in the morning, they bring me in to the toilet and he was coming in and he looked at me and he _____ whether I hear what he say and I told him to sit down because he was tall, 6'6". I told him to sit down on the toilet. I take a piece of paper and I told him to take off his cap and make the measurement. He said that's it, I said that's it. I can make the cape in two or three hours but I worked two days, in the same toilet every day. I was sitting over there for two days and I made him the cape. He brought me in a piece of bread in the middle of work and I made him the cape and he looked at that. I hope he still has it. He was very happy. Then he don't touch me. He never beat me, never, for eighteen months I was working for him. He never put a finger on me.

Q: Tell me a little bit more about this work, because you were doing the same work for a year and half?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you see a lot of people coming and going?

A: I see men were coming out of Birkenau. We saw the transports coming, people coming in transports. We saw and we saw the selections, left, right. 1944, I think it was April or May was coming a transfer, 10,000 people from _____ Budapest and _____. Those people never knew where they were going. They lie and say they are going some place and it would be changed and for other people they were going to work. They're bringing with them fur coats and all kinds of things and food and we asked the guard there, bread, we asked you see what there is. This is not for us, this is for you. You don't smell the steam that comes out from the chimneys? Yes, we feel it there, that is not for us. People said okay. They give us a little piece of bread or crackers, no we need it for us. Later on when the selections, right, left, they realized the first group is going on and to see who comes out of the shower and who does not come out, they realize that. _____ . That's all from there. This place is not for us. This place is for you not for us. One time I think there came a group a mother with her daughter. A beautiful girl I see her with my eyes. Beautiful, young, beautiful and they separate the mother from the daughter, and the daughter started to cry and she run back and the first man grabbed her by the hair and throw her over there. And she run back to the mother and she cried and she said I want to be with my mother. Wherever my mother goes I want to be with my mother. They told her your mother is going to the gas and you're not going. She said yes, I want to go. And he grabbed that pistol and pulled it out, he shot her. The selection was made and they put the ghetto back, the whole 10,000 and they killed them there with machine guns.

Q: They killed everybody?

A: Everybody, all the 10,000, and this girl was the first.

Q: Did you see this?

A: I saw it from far away. I was watching.

Q: You knew it was going on?

A: I used to know every day what's going on there because I was coming twice a day.

Q: Were you working at the crematorium at the time there was that uprising?

A: In 1944 in August or September there were four girls and two boys. Two boys and one girl got caught and got hanged and the woman _____ I was there and they got hanged. One boy and two girls he got men in the mornings every day come out and we got a

memorial for the six million April 19 every year. One time it's coming out and a man speaking a few years ago and he got a slide and he showed this is a slide and this and this girl and she got hanged for the uprising. I said the other girl, I don't know nothing. I said well, you got the one slide and you don't know -- and I told him all about it. He said, oh, I have to look it up and see there.

Q: What were you aware of?

A: You see when they were hanging somebody the whole camp cannot go in the barracks until they have seen for themselves the hanging and talk around it why they get a hanging and for what and everything. The two girls were hanged in the camp for women. That's in Auschwitz, not Birkenau in Auschwitz because they used to work in the ammunition factory. They organized some ammunition, but one crematorium, they damaged one crematorium. They got the gas chambers.

Q: What were you aware of when this going on?

A: What?

Q: Were you aware of what they were doing?

A: Yes.

Q: Before the hanging?

A: No, we find it out after. Find out after, see what happened. Nobody don't know what's going on. Just the six people the two boys and two girls, nobody else. Even inside in Birkenau _____ even in there they don't know nothing. Those four girls and those two boys they organized their own with nobody's help. There was no nothing before that.

Q: Because you were working near the crematorium, did they isolate you at all from other prisoners?

A: No.

Q: But you knew exactly what was going on over there?

A: Yes.

Q: So they didn't try to keep you from passing information to other people, nothing like that?

A: No. They were coming out, we used to know the news in the evening and if anything happened any place we used to know in the evenings when we were coming home from

work after the appell. They were coming around to each barrack. If I knew something I was going over to tell them. They would give the news to another one. There was a rabbi in Auschwitz in block two. Block two was tailors and there tailors all the good clothes they'd look them over and fix them. People were coming and hiding some gold, diamonds and rubies in the clothes, mostly the shoulders. When it comes to that tailor shop it was outside in Auschwitz not in where the camp is but on the outside. They find some gold, diamonds, but from their town this is _____ I talk to people yesterday. I talked there were even some of them in Auschwitz don't even know what I told them. There was a rabbi in block two and _____ in English the block manager there, in block two they paid him. If he was alive, he got enough. He built a closet with a toilet. In the morning the rabbis going out to the appell and before we go out to work, he was going in that close and he was sitting inside until we were coming back from work to the appell and at night he was free.

Q: You were talking about the rabbi?

A: Yes, and the rabbi was in the closet the whole day. In the evening he was coming out in the appell and he get a slice of bread until in the morning, until January '45, the 18th when we were all going to the death march, I was there too. I saw and another guy was in the same group with me working from Belgium, a young guy 18 or 19 years old and we saw somebody fall there. Who fall down because it was a blizzard, snow, was hard walking, hard snow and we saw somebody fall down in the snow and we pick him up. We pick him up and I used to know the rabbi and why I used to know in '43 I was going every morning 5:00 in the morning in the barracks saying _____ after my father. The young guy picked him up and take him around and he hold on to us and we spoke but in the middle way one soldier stopped us and give us he got us some stuff, how do you call a slice of _____, I don't know how to say it in English, but a slice _____ and I and the other guy get the ropes and we pulled there a whole day and a whole night and this man hold on to us a whole night and we walked until the morning. The morning it was getting a little bit day light, they stopped us and put us in I don't where, in a small town and they put us in all over in stables with animals, cows horses, pigs. Divided, you know, until the evening. The evening they call us out and they said we're going to _____ and from that time we never saw the rabbi again. See, many people don't know what was going on there, what we can do to help people. The boys risked their lives and they helped the rabbi to be alive. What happened nobody don't know.

Q: You brought up something that is interesting.

A: What?

Q: In the camps, you were able to at least in some small ways observe Judaism?

A: Yes.

Q: Some of the ritual of Judaism?

A: In the same block, people were praying every morning.

Q: Were you aware of Jewish holidays?

A: Jewish holidays we were working. We cannot take Jewish holidays. If Jewish holidays, one day you mentioned I will never forget it. We see nobody and we see a soldier, a German soldier and stay and look down there and we started working fast and he say to us slow down, don't work so fast. Today is Saturday. Just like that, today is Saturday. I know all the Jewish holidays and he started counting all the Jewish holidays, Passover, Rosh Hoshana, Yom Kippur, all the holidays he started counting and asked him and he'd say himself I'm from Budapest. I'm from Budapest. You all can give me some money? We're scared to answer. He said don't be scared who goes out there to Birkenau when there are people coming on the transport, I need some Hungarian money. I want to send home to my people. _____ . We was working there, the mine was maybe 50 feet away where the barracks were for the soldiers. Every day about three o'clock I opened up the _____ and I'm going to make a signal I want every day another person to come every day and I'm going to have 11 pieces of bread and divide it each for them and they got it and for maybe three or four weeks we give him money. We got some connections. Guys that were working there when the transfers were coming and we got a little money and then later on he disappeared and until now I don't know what's happened to him.

End of Tape #3

Tape #3

Q: I understand there was a big transport from Lodz, I guess 1944, when you were working at the crematorium.

A: You see, I'd like to comment. I don't want to mix it in one with the other one, you know. I want to comment today, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: I want to comment today. If you want me, I want to tell that 1944 was when the -- short time before the war was over. You see, Poland used to know -- they fought in the end, you know, and Germany was different. You see, the Germans hold it to until the last minute. Like, to hold us, Auschwitz until the last minute. January 18, you know, eight o'clock in the evening, they started to blow the horn, you know, "Everybody out." You know, without them we go to work, we go home, we don't know. But seven days later, the 25th, the Russians occupied Auschwitz. They took us out, more than half, but Auschwitz got 60,000 people, prisoners. How many was going out that night, I don't know until now. I tried to find it out before, and I can't find out because I never met no people, you know. Yesterday, I met some -- a few people who were in the same transport with me there, you know. It's all -- we don't know, but until 1944, was in and Poland and Lodz was a ghetto. And they hold the ghetto until the last minute. Why? Because the people used to work there. And the ghetto was in the cemetery. In the end of the cemetery, they build up some barracks and the people were staying in the ghetto. And they got -- they got a very, very hard time in the ghetto, you know. It was with children. When they bring them in, in '44, in _____ of September, was children there. And -- and the time was short. It was Russian hold the crematoriums and the gas chambers were working 48 hours. Little children, they grab by a arm, by a leg, by the hair, in the throat, and they throw them in the oven _____. They throw it in. So they want the Russians to know that it's the end today. He -- and this was terrible. It was, they take a child by the arm or by the hair and throw them in the oven, you know. But it would have been night, but _____ in the night, you know. But when I was coming out in the morning, I got all the noise. I got it, what's happened in the night. In the night they could do because nobody saw, nobody. They got nobody, they know there.

Q: Let me ask a naive question. Sometimes when the bodies are incinerated in the -- in the crematorium --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- are there pieces of bone or does the whole body become ash?

A: The whole body become ash. I never saw no bones. I never saw no bones. Maybe they take out the bones in the inside. Whether they do, I don't know. I never saw the bones. I just saw the ashes because I was behind the building, not in the front in the building, you know. I was

behind it. But ashes was coming out in the back, it was coming out there. So I didn't see no bones, so I don't -- I'm not going to tell you stories that I never -- don't saw, you know, because I don't know. See, the truth is natural. The best way is to say what you know and what you see, there, you know. See, when I was coming to Auschwitz, I even don't know this Auschwitz, you know. I just saw the sign _____ sign, you know, but I don't know this Auschwitz. But everything was _____, was Auschwitz, _____, you know. You see, because the train was stopped in Auschwitz, not in the _____. It was coming down, you know, and they give us a number. They see, right, that the number they give us here. And they say -- and they say, "That's your name." You see, "That's your name." And they call us, "_____, _____, _____." And that's it, you know. And when they name, they give us -- they give us a potato, you know, _____ potato. You can't eat it, throw it away. They grab us and bring us right to the camp, to _____ -- you know. But anyway, I don't work there too long there, you know, _____, you know. I wasn't _____ out there. You know, a few weeks, and they bring me back -- they bring me back to Auschwitz. And they bring me back to Auschwitz, and a selection there (ph.). And when I come to Auschwitz, come in -- 35 people who come with me in Borna. And, like, they are going to the gas chambers, you know. This was in November -- in November, yeah -- in November, 1943 -- in November. And we was -- I think the were about 35 people. We was already _____. And we got our selection and we had to take off their clothes and everything. He let us in -- in -- in the _____. The whole day, you know, I don't know how to call them. I never saw a place like that. And then we stayed there over night, in the morning was coming, little trucks in the red _____ and push us in, one on top of the other one, and bring us to Auschwitz, to the crematoriums. It's in Borna _____, which is nine kilometers, not too far, you know. You come down there -- come down a guy in a barrack and call the numbers. Call -- and call my number and then he asked me, "Where are you from?" You see, I was a Pollack, you know. "Where you from?" I say, "From Russia, from Poland, from Russia." "Russia? What's your name?" I say, "Radashinski (ph)." They say, "Radashinski?" He calls me, I never heard in my life. So it was, you know. And he put me in _____ and put me in the corner, he put me in. And he say they'll take me, about ten, 15 minutes he comes out with a piece of bread. He say, "Come around there," you know, "and take away the last one." That's when I used to have a few friends -- good friends I used to know from home, you know. And they -- they -- I never saw them in my life. Another soldier then he come back, he bring me into the barrack. Bring me to the barrack, I lay down. I turn around, I see a young guy who stay by me and looked at me he say to me, "Oh, I know you." I said, "You know me? From where you know me?" "I know you from village. My _____ was close to you," you know, "You see, my name is Edler (ph.). I said, "Elder?" I told him, "Maybe I remember you, maybe not," you know. And he say -- I said, "What is here?" He said, "Here is just -- it's not a hospital, it's just for people to rest in," you know. And then he gone out to work. He said, "It's not too many Jewish people that stay here, but Doctor Mengele (ph.) comes twice a week here, Tuesday and Friday." Now, today is Tuesday that's how I know it was a Tuesday and not another day, you know. "Today is Tuesday and now it's after 12 o'clock and he has not shown up. He is not coming today, but when he coming, I let you know." I said, "How you know?" He said, "I'm from Krakow. My grandfather was a rabbi in Krakow. And

here these two doctors, who saved some people -- Jewish people tried to help him, their life, and somebody in the neighbors called the Gestapo and took out the people in the Krakow, is out in the middle -- in the middle the town and Krakow _____ is when they come out all the time different houses, and businesses, you know, it's very nice. And they took out over there and they killed all of them. And then took the two doctors here. And the two doctors got away from work -- from here -- there." And I say, "How are you come here?" "See, I was coming with you -- with me." He say, "_____ here and I got weak from work and they put me in here and I'm here five weeks already." I said, "It's so bad, how you can be five weeks?" "The doctors help me. The doctors -- Doctor Mengele is supposed to come here and they hide me." What I want to let you know, this was Tuesday. Thursday, the same boy come and tell me Doctor -- that Doctor Mengele is going to be in tomorrow -- Friday. I said, "What do I have to do?" He said, "Jump through the window." I say, "You tell me to jump through the window? I cannot raise my leg to go out to the _____. I have to take and put it down and you tell me to jump through the window?" "You have to help yourself. If not, Mengele coming, you're going to be -- he is going to look at you, you're going to be the first." At four o'clock -- about four o'clock, I take a look. The same guy sit at a table and asked, "Who want to go out to work?" I was the first one. He looked at me and said, "What's your name?" And I tell him. He calls me again. So I begged him, "Let me out. I got some friends there. I like to work. I don't want to be here. Let me out." He let me out. The next morning, Mengele was coming, he got 150 people of -- the guy told me. You know, 150 people. He came up, he said, "You go over there, you will be the first," you know. So the life was not easy. Every day was something else. You know, coming out. Once somebody got a lot in their life, somebody not, you know. It's very, very -- well, it's hard to talk, you know. But --

Q: I want to ask you --

A: Yes.

Q: Now, you are, were in Auschwitz a year?

A: Eighteen -- eighteen months.

Q: And most of the time, you were working in this crematorium duty?

A: Yes.

Q: Anything else in terms of the way you were -- you were treated or special things that you saw or could do because of your job?

A: Well, my job was -- I was working for an SS man. His name was Polige (ph.). Just to look at him scared the people can fall dead, you know. A face -- a really, really murder. Tall, always going with a little _____, with the German _____. But, when he was coming out of the job, that few minutes where he was staying, we was working so hard moving the

whole day because -- he know that who he is. He always hate out life. He say, "Where come the strong to us to work so fast?" We don't know. That's all, but he keep us. Then he was coming, he was working so fast or not, he would not keep us. He would see one person, you know, work a little slowly, you know, you all would be gone. We make up the mind, all of us, to do it -- what we can -- fast when he comes out. How we know when he coming? We got -- we got a supervisor. We was ten, eleven people, one was the supervisor of us. He was inside, in the mine and he would stay outside, in the top. When he was coming, he can see when he is coming with his car. And then he give us a signal. He give us -- when he give us a signal, you know, we know we had to work fast. And that's -- he was keep us. He would say, "You good workers, fast workers." That's what the -- that's what the German's would like, working fast. When you work fast for them, they _____.

Q: Now, you had mentioned earlier that when you came home from -- when you went back to your barracks at night --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- after work, which was in the other camp.

A: Yeah.

Q: That was a time at which everybody kind of talked about what they learned during the day?

A: Yeah. We were talking about -- we were talking about the news was going around then. The news was going around then, because some of the -- so many people who used to work by the gas chambers or the crematoriums, they always got to keep the special -- the people, the _____ people. See, there was -- was staying there in _____. They got a special barracks, you know, and over there, not together with us, you know. But the news was coming around, in the day not in the night, it was coming around, what's going to happen? How we know that -- how we know that there was the four girls and the two boys, you see? There are other things, you know, was coming. And Mengele when he come, when he don't come, see?

Q: How useful was this information, this informal network?

A: You see, one _____ each other. That's -- that's what's going around. There was no radio, was no television, was no telephone, nothing, just with the mouth, you know. Or sometimes -- or sometime lunchtime, you know, when we gather _____, we lay down there in the grass resting, we was talking, you know, who's coming down, what we saw, what kind of transfer was coming and what -- what -- what's happened there, you know, so and so, you know. That's the news there.

Q: Was this information helpful in any way?

A: Was -- was helpful or not because this was help -- this was help -- we was thinking when was coming the end, you know. When we see something, you know, we can figure out when will come the end. You see, in -- in '44 -- '44, the end, you know, we where thinking, you know, when was coming the end. Was one airplane flying, you know, at no time you looked and there was pieces of papers. But some of them were guarded there and some of them not. Who guarded there was hiding. And when someone guarded there, the _____ was coming and taken away. And they never read it, what it is. Or later on, you know, if someone find it out when the _____ was this. See, this was in '44, in October, November -- was then, you know. See, in '45, too. In '45 -- in the beginning of '45, was the same thing. As a matter of fact, when -- before I got survived, in May 1st, in '45, I was staying -- I was staying in -- in Germany. In 1945, you know, when Russia was in Gross-Rosen and Gross-Rosen to Dolha. And in Dolha, you know, we was thinking nobody was coming out. Because Dolha go a brook (ph.), a typos brook. They took it out, people, and put it into their brook -- in their brook. In a few days, the people get sick and the high fever and their dead, you know. And for -- just for this, we was very scared of what _____. _____ was not too long, it was a month in Dolha, in January. In February -- in February, we out -- many, not just me, many -- and we go into Mindov. I even don't know where Mindov is, I just remember the name, you know. This must be -- a small town must be there because the same -- the same kenta (ph.) -- was -- _____ when I survived, I meet my wife in Germany and _____ was the same kenta. Was a kenta from the fields, cut it out, you know, holes, and make steps, five steps is in three -- two feet of the one. Two, three feet _____, you know, and put it on a _____ with a little straw, you know, and a piece of blanket. This was a place for sleeping. A kitchen was outside, you know. And there was a few thousand people there in this barrack, you know, there. And what -- and there wasn't too long, it was in February, March -- March. April, they took us out, again, they put us in the trains. We're going around, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, until we survive in May.

Q: Let's backtrack a little.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about how you came to leave Auschwitz.

A: How I came to Auschwitz?

Q: How you came to leave it.

A: To leave it, Auschwitz?

Q: Yeah, tell me about that.

A: Just simple, we used to work, we don't know nothing. We don't know nothing. We come in the evening, we get a slice of bread, you know, going to take our shower and then we are

going took lay down. Nine o'clock, the bell ring and they take off the light, you know. The next day -- next today, we go out to work and we come from work, we come and we sit and wait until the -- before the light gets out, just -- the signal started to whistle. Everybody out. Everybody out.

Q: What day was -- when was this?

A: This was -- this was January 18th, in '45, okay. Everybody out. And they told us _____ -- that's me -- to stay together, you know, to go into -- to five in line and groups. They get who groups is altogether. And they took the _____ and they took us out. Where we was going, we don't know. However, we come outside, we see a lot of soldiers with rifles, with dogs, you know, the German dogs, the Shepard dogs, and we walking and we walking in the snow, the blizzard, you know, a whole night until it gets daylight -- a little bit daylight. Until then I don't know of the town where we were stopped, but it must be a small town because they left us in -- in stables -- in stables and from cows and horses, pigs, you know, until the evening. And then at the evening, which get a little dark, they took -- took us out again to the trains and we were going to Gross-Rosen. Coming to Gross-Rosen took us about two days. To come to Gross-Rosen -- was two days in Gross-Rosen. That is a _____ camp. Over there, in all pictures, you have a big hole and put it down a piece of _____ in the cement floor, you know. And we lay down at night, a tall man with a short man, they put together. You see, my legs suppose to come straight to his head. How -- he's taller than me, I can stretch the legs. And they gone in -- the _____ are going in with a piece pipes, you know, a half-inch pipe -- three-foot pipes and beat him. "Stretch your legs, stretch your legs," you know. When I -- when I move down to stretch my legs to his -- to his head, you know, there -- if he is short, they beat him, you know. And that was -- a few days that was, not too long. But they don't let me out. They don't let me because I don't have no -- I just got a number. I don't have no _____. All they thought I had, they _____, because they look at -- they look at my records, Radashinski, I then come up Pollack, you know. And when I -- and when we all we were going out from Gross-Rosen to Dolha, I jumped out through the window. I jump out the -- in first floor. And they look for me, other than that, they can't find me because I was in that _____, I was running in from the first _____, when they stay, by the gate who broke out, you know. There -- the Nazi's there, when they caught me, they'd kill me, you know, in Gross-Rosen. And then I was coming to Dolha.

Q: Where do you jump out of?

A: Through a window in the barrack, you know. The window -- the window was open and I jumped out through the window and I run and they _____ who was staying, he broke out from Gross-Rosen.

Q: That was to get out of Gross-Rosen?

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Then I was coming to Dolha. Coming to Dolha, I got a typhus

_____, you know.

Q: Were you put in the typhus _____?

A: No, I don't go _____. There was a _____ in the city. Yes, some friends of mine. I used to -- met one guy from Belgium, you know, and we got very, very friendly. We got very friendly. He almost died in the typhus _____. He bring we one time -- he bring me one time, he was going out, they took him out at night. He was coming from work. He was working the same job as me, you know. They took him one night, out in the -- in '43. And I think it was November or December that he _____, you know, some transports come in at night and the afternoon, now. And he find gold change. And he risked it and he bring it in, but he was scared to hold it there. He give it to me and I got a friend on the _____, his name it Houser (ph.) _____, he is from my home town. He is also in the same business I am. And he was in my barrack with me. And then was -- into my barrack -- when I mentioned before that the two groups was going out before me, from the 7150 (ph.), he was in the second group. He was going to place to digging out stones, you know, they dig them out. And then in November or December, they bring him back, you know, he was so nothing -- weak, that he cannot work no more, you know, that they bring him to Auschwitz to go into the gas chambers. How -- how _____, I don't know. Although, he told me, but I was coming from work in the evening and I saw him by _____. And then he told me the story that he run away, you know. I say, "What are you going to do now? You're not registered here," you know, "anyway, they -- the find you, you know, they hang right there by the kitchen there. They hang you." He say, "Well, I risk but I did it. And I got this piece of gold change." Well, that guy from Krakow. And then he got it -- not a Jewish star, no, no, he got a star as a criminal. And they find him, they bring him to Auschwitz. They don't know he's Jewish. He told me. His name -- he got to change his name, Kavalski, Adam Kavalski, you know. And he told me he's Jewish. He come and talk _____. And I say, "Adam, I see _____ you're talking. I want you to help me." He said, "What?" I said, "That's my friend." That's when he say -- I told him the whole story, what he told me. "And I don't want him to get caught. I -- when they get him -- caught him, you know, they're going to beat him up or they going hang him, they are going to send him to the gas chambers, you know. Please help me to get him a job. _____ work, because he can get it at the same way like the boys did it for me, you know, through the _____," you know. He said, "I'll see what I can do." He come back and he say to me, "Yes, I got a couple." But he wanted something. And I ask the guy what he wanted. I told you he was going in the -- in the typhus _____, you know, in Belgium. And I say -- he say, "Okay. Or tell him -- tell him that he can bring him some -- a piece of bread." And I told him, I said, "Look, Adam, I got him this change." I told him the truth, from where I got it, you know. If it ever comes up, I don't want to be involved. I'm going to be involved anyway. You know they are going to beat me to death. And he said, "Don't worry. Nobody going to beat." Let's see, I give him -- and he bring us that time all whole bread, cut it in pieces, you know, four pieces. And he got a job for me. He got a job to the Union in _____, to the ammunition factory, where they used to make ammunition and bullets, the _____. And he was going there. When he was coming over there, he find his wife.

Because when they was coming from _____, a shoe shop. They was shoes, not _____, but shoes, he and his wife. And a little boy, three years, the little boy, they grabbed her in my _____ and they bring them to the gas chambers, you know. In the hole, they put away, you know, the boy. See, when she was coming to Auschwitz, when she was coming with the woman camp was _____ with men. The women, together was separate, you know. And she was going to the ammunition -- to the Union. And he don't know about her. Anyway, now when I find a job for him, he was coming back, he find her, you know. And she survived. She survived but she got killed in an accident, a car. And the children, he say that he saw, when he was riding, you know, a truck hit a _____, you know. But he's in New York. He is -- he's good off, you know. So --

Q: So back in Dolha.

A: Yeah. In Dolha, I was going to Mindov.

Q: Did you work at all in Dolha?

A: No, you worked volunteer, no work. But Dolha -- Dolha was closed to _____, you know. I cannot get no shower, no shirt, no nothing. Maybe before, I don't know. But at that time, where we was, you know, they never saw people going out to work. All the blocks was full with prisoners and locked up, never can coming out.

Q: So you were locked in your barracks?

A: Yes.

Q: All of the time?

A: All the time. A month or more than a month, Something like that, you know.

Q: You didn't go outside?

A: No outside, no. No outside. In the evening -- in the evening, _____, they never let us out. They have kept us inside in the morning and in the evening.

Q: Where were the bathrooms?

A: Huh? The bathroom was in the hall, you know. We can go, you know, yes.

Q: Inside or outside?

A: Huh? Inside. Inside.

Q: All right. So you were locked up there for a month?

A: Yeah.

Q: And then?

A: And then we going to Mindov. It was close -- close to the end. We come to the -- in Mindov, I was around there until April. In April -- by the end of April, they took us out, 4,000 or 5,000 people, and we travel around back and forth, back and forth for a few days. And one day, we stopped. We stopped between a mountain. And where we see no building, we only see no nothing. And we see nobody to come in to give us a piece of bread or some water or -- for three days, nothing. One day, they come in, the soldiers, and open up the doors from the trains, they were the slide doors, there was the _____ where they carried the animals, you know, cows, pigs. And the mountain looked so high and the train was in the middle, it looked like it, like, divided it, divided the mountains to make the railroad track there. And the train was running up long. We started running up --

Q: I'm sorry. Who were the soldiers?

A: The Germans.

Q: Okay

A: The Germans. And they said, "Go and you're free." "We're free?" And we started to run up the mountain and we come high, maybe 25, 30 feet high, the Germans -- the Germans sit at the top with machine guns and started to fire at us and we run around there, 100 of us found dead. And they come and -- and we come -- there was about 4,000 or 5,000 -- I think -- I think about 4,000, about less than 4,000 was alive, you know. We go back in the trains. Come back in the trains, a few hours later, come in two soldiers coming and they're saying they need ten people to help mop -- help mop the _____, you know. And they say that they need ten people to volunteer. Nobody want to volunteer because we were scared, you know, to go, you know. One comes insides and two stay outside and everybody hide and he grabbed who he wanted. He grabbed and throw out from the train, throw out, and I was out of there, too. I said, "Oh, my God, that's my last day to myself," you know. I see that's the end. Because he told us to go back up and then he got the machine guns and they shoot us, you know, looking at all the dead there. That's my last day. And I say to myself, "Oh, my God, if I got a piece -- I got a piece of bread, decent piece of bread to eat for my last minute there. I will be happy." When we go on, their soldiers go on with us. And their soldiers come with us, it must be something else. I asked a question, I answered my question myself, you know. When we come up there, the machine gun is gone. It was a little -- a little radio station in the workshop. And they way it got damaged, was an American planes past there and throw down bombs at that time. And that radio station got damaged. They took us to clean it up, you know. They give me shovel, one got a pick, one got a broom, you know. And then we come up to that radio station and look in there, I see a counter. First thing we see, don't see nothing, no food, no _____, no nothing. I

looked into the counter, I see some bread, some little, little pumpernickel bread. I grabbed a little bread, I say, "I got my wish, I'm going to live." And I grabbed a little bread under the jacket and I started to eat. And one of the soldiers got a stick and he hit me and I fall down there, and he kicked me. Kicked me, my face, my head, you know. I take the shovel and go to work. Went to work, and we come down there and we come down to the train there, and we laid down. Next morning, we hear something. We looked over in the road. And we had no more than two little windows, everybody want to see, you know. Then we see -- we see how the trains look over there, it's not the Germans. We think it's the Russians, but it was not the Russians. It was the United States army. And we started to holler, and holler, and holler. Comes up a jeep with two soldiers, American, you know. One was a little man, he was an MP, and he talks very good German and he asks, "What is this?" We say, "We is from the _____ of German," you know, from the concentration camp. _____ is concentration camp. And he say to us in German, "Don't be worried. We are Americans," you know, "you're all going to be free." First, they went and took us around all the soldiers with the patches, you know, outside and arrest them. And then they tell us to come out and they kept _____ to cooking food for us. They put it in the kitchen, the started to cook the food. And we coming out and the same soldier say to me -- he see that I'll working. He say, "Don't eat that. You see, you're only going to eat -- it's only going to be there tomorrow." I said, "Why? We eat nothing for three days, no water, no nothing." He said, "You can make it three days with no food no water, you're going to make it again. And then you're going to eat, _____. Because you're stomach is too thin. If you eat rice, you get diarrhea, you have no doctors, no nothing." It was true. _____ the same night. But -- and he said, "I'm going to _____. It's in town, three miles, and we're going to see where -- we're going to have _____." And he was coming back -- and he was coming back, he gave us some barracks from the German soldiers in Feldafing. _____ and this was in Tucci (ph.), four kilometers from Feldafing. And we was the first -- this group was the first 4,000 people in Feldafing. And they give us rooms and we got 18 rooms, 18 beds in one room. And I got 18 people in one room. And they give us -- we go and get our shower and everything, but don't we get enough clothes, we get our pajamas. And we get our pajamas. I get them. And these pajamas, I was wearing six weeks. No shoes, no underwear, no nothing. And nobody would come and see us, plus get us something to eat. And the soldiers say to me, "Every day you get a slice of bread, toasted." I say, "What is toasted?" "Because you see, your stomach cannot take it." And again, I get a bowl of water with a little bit sugar and every day a little more for two weeks. I took the bread and I go down to the front and put it on a piece of paper and attach it to the bread. It's hard, you know, it's hard, toasted. And then I eat it for two weeks, it's not _____. _____. I walk one time in the streets with another guy, and the same soldier passed by the _____ and stopped us. He stopped us and I recognized _____, he was -- these German _____ are coming to Russia, you know. And I recognize him and I started to speak to him in German. I say, "You're the one that give us our freedom there, four kilometers from here, in Tucci." He said, "Oh, yeah. _____." I said, "Nobody come six weeks, nobody come looking for us. We need something to wear, we got no clothes, and we don't have nothing. We don't have -- you see. And that -- and he wash my pajamas, I stand inside until the other dry. I wash his pajamas, he stay inside while they dry, you know. And that's not right, what's going

on?" You know, he said, "Yeah." And he got two handbags and one shoulder bag. And he took out his shoulder bag and he opened it up and got the money, German money straight from the _____. And he got so mad. He got -- he throw out the whole money and take a lighter and light it and burned the whole money. And he say to us, "I want you to come in three miles away tomorrow morning but not before -- be after seven o'clock. Then you get something to eat." I said, "Okay." He said after seven o'clock, we was over there before six o'clock. He said, "Don't come to the front, come to the back for a little _____, maybe about ten, 15 feet high." And we have laid down in this -- in the grass and we wait. Seven o'clock, all the soldiers coming out, coming -- taking breakfast. And so were eating and some say it's not good, they don't want to eat no more, you know. And he comes out, we saw him, we give him our signal, we started to cough. He look around, he looked up, he saw us. He got back into the camp and told the captain he got two refugees from a concentration camp and they're naked. And the captain say come in. He call us in, we come down, we go into the office and the captain look at us and give him a paper and he took us to the PX. He took us and he get us shirt and pants and shoes and socks and underwear and jackets everything. And he bring us out, he gets us to eat. The captain say, "If you want, you can come in twice a day there, help mop and you can eat. Even sometimes three times a day, you know." And there was -- see, when they make the hamburgers, one soldier say that the hamburgers don't taste no good, they don't eat no more. So big _____, you know. He said, "Do you want it?" I said, "Yeah." He bring us to the camp to visit, the DP camp of Feldafing. Three times a day, whenever we wanted to eat, we took it, you know, we mopped. A case of oranges, when you see some of them are a little bit spoiled, you know, they don't -- they don't eat none. They give it to us. They do not -- it's coming a new transports of people from Feldafing, some of them were sick. Sometime a young guy come into my room and he say, "I got a cousin that" -- he told me the town -- a small town -- "and she's sick, she needs a piece of white bread." I say, "Come back in the evening, six o'clock, I bring you some back." I bring him a whole bread and bought him some sugar, you know, oranges. Who was taken to the hospital coming to me with the other guy, he helped me. A few weeks later, the same girl, everybody say she sick, she need a piece of white bread, she come to my room and thank me. And she looked at me and looked at me. A few days she bring me a pair of pants -- white pants, linen pants. I said, "Where you get the material?" "I get two sheets, two linen sheets. I took one sheet and made your pants." That time -- that time I wasn't like this, I got a 26 or 27 waist, I put on the pants, they fit beautiful. I got her two brothers -- I got in the same room, there was tailors. I feed them three times a day. They got a warm blanket, a very thin blanket, they make my suit with two pairs of pants. One pair of pants -- small pants I used to wear, _____ and I _____, you know, and the long pants, I feed her, you know. Well --

Q: Did you get food from the soldiers?

A: That's what I'm saying, yeah. Yeah. I used to work for them -- I used to work for them about two months or three months. I even got a certificate from there.

Q: What kind of work were you doing for them?

A: I helped out, you know, washed the dishes, you know, the pots, you know. It was not too bad, you know. It was not too bad. This was in the beginning. A while later, all few weeks later, we got some -- we got some -- we, I and the other guy, we got helpers. Some _____ Germans, you know, we bring them in and let them wash. We watch what they're doing, you know. And this was -- and this was _____, you know. And then I met my wife, you know.

Q: In Feldafing?

A: No, no, no. Through the guy that I just told you. I saved him -- his life. He was coming to Feldafing, looking for somebody. Of course, there was papers hanging around there and people who survived, you know, were all coming around. He was coming looking and he saw me. And he told me, he was with another young lady that I used to know, you know. And he say, "It's one and two times, was she and is in the _____. And the _____ was in the same business as I was and I used to know that. And he say to me, "Why you have to stay here? 18 beds in one room? Come out here, you get a private room, you know." And I took a friend of mine, _____ all of the time. I say, "Let's go. We cannot include him." And we're going down there, there's a _____ not far from Landsberg, you know, about 25 kilometers. And we come in there and we get a room from a German lady, with her brother was inspector in the -- in the -- in the City Hall, you know. I said you got to _____ the Germans is about us, you know, in the City Hall. He was inspector. He was so Nazi, that his sister was coming in -- her name was Cathy (ph.) -- he said, "Cathy, get out and come in and say, "Heil, Hitler." And she didn't want to do that and he sent her for six months hard labor, he sent her. And then -- and then he got arrested. He was coming home. He had to go into the _____ American, see, and he didn't want to go and he hang himself, you know. So Nazi he was, yes.

Q: We have to change the tape.

End of Tape #3

Tape #4

A: I got some people in my business, you know --

Q: Let's start this thought again. We just started a tape.

A: Okay. Yes, yes.

Q: You were telling me about Feldafing and the conditions there.

A: Feldafing, in the beginning, when I was there, I was six weeks and I was walking around in my pajamas, and never was coming -- later on, I hold some onra (ph.), yeah. And the onra used to steal away their clothes, their cigarettes, you know, and their -- their -- their coffee and sell them in the black market. This I can tell you.

Q: The UNRRA people?

A: The UNRRA people. As a matter of fact, I tell you, when I was working in Feldafing, I was in _____ and I was living private and I was working. I got -- I got a license to work, you know. I make _____, in 40 kilometers in _____, you know, special about four years. And I like they examine this and they -- they prove it, I am _____. Not a Nazi can get a license in Germany, and I pay tax. I go to just black market, you know, and I pay tax and everything. I got some job on my license _____ from there, you know. It's _____, lady to me on the onra when she comes helping people. She said, "Oh, you're a _____. And I say, "Yes." "Can you a me a Persian raincoat?" I said, "Yes." "Where you can get the cloth?" I say, "Where you from?" "What do you mean from where?" She come from the United States and then she call my name, I never pay attention. I say, "Can you bring me the skins from over there?" "Oh, no. You can buy them there." I say, "Where can I buy them?" "Black market." I say -- I took out my license and I show her my shop because I was living that time _____, a German, you know. And his wife was old and I talked to her and she said, "Yes." She used a machine and all that equipment and I say I'm going to pay her so much a month, you know, rent and everything, if she let me use, because I want to work. And she agreed. And I put it in there and I made my examination, you know, and everything, my job. And she said to me, "You can buy." And I said, "Okay. I can buy it." "You want me to go to Canada?" I said, "Make no difference." "Yeah, I'm going to Canada, United States, America, you know. You see, I hear they are taking out saw people, send them to Canada, you know, for _____. You make me a coat and I send you where you want, in the United States or Canada." I say, "To make you a coat, time to make a coat, if the coat is still here in the United States, because the skin was high, maybe \$7,000 -- \$8,000." I said, "Lady, I have no money. If you want it, buy the skins and I can make you and I tell you how much I want for my work." "You want me to pay you? Do you know who I am? I'm going to take you out of here. You going to America." I said, "Okay. Thank you." You know, and this is true believe me. I don't -- I don't make this up, you know. See, and the other time when she saw me -- when she saw me,

she looked at me to tell me hello because she don't want to talk there.

Q: Now, when you were in Feldafing, it was run by the U.S. army still?

A: Yeah, yeah, yes.

Q: Was there any effort made to send people home or help them find their families or --

A: It's nothing -- it's nothing to go home. Their trying to go home was the same way was by the Germans, the Pollacks -- the Pollacks kill people right after the war. Jewish people, when they come into their homes and they say, "That's my home. That's my house," you know. "No more you house. That's mine." You know. In the certain, it's not finding nobody, there's not to finding nobody. People was going -- people was going home, they're looking for their own people, they was coming back. There's nowhere -- there's no home no more. So you never went back to work --

A: I never went back until I was 92, I was.

Q: How do you meet your second wife?

A: How did I have meet her? Okay. When I was in Feldafing, and I saw my friend from _____, and he told me about her family, you know, and I used to know her family. I used to know her uncle. And I say, "Okay. I'm going to see her." And I got a lot of friends, but I worked with him in Auschwitz and he was _____. I say to him, "Let's go. Why we stay here? Look at that, 18 people in one room." And I was coming to the small town of _____, and _____ was _____'s home town. And _____ was the second man from Hitler. You can imagine what kind of town -- small town, you know, would come -- many Nazi's was there. When I was coming there, I was at his house and the house I plan for was there. And she was staying outside the house and she call her friend and her friend come over to the window and she looked around and she said, "Frieda, come up." She said, "No, I don't want to come up." And she called me to the window and I look and her and her friend say, "Go down to her." I was going down, is where I met her, you know. She told me from where she is and what she is, you know. And then she was fishing there and she throw the fish and she hooked me in, then she got me, you know.

Q: One -- yes, one other thing I have want to ask you --

A: Yes.

Q: -- is how you got over to the United States. Was that difficult?

A: How I got over here?

Q: How did you choose to come here? Was it difficult?

A: I tell you. I can go to Israel, you know, but she told me she got some brothers here, you know, two brothers. And I was coming. My papers was made out in Corsicana, Texas, not _____, Coriscana, Texas on -- I know the people now. And when my ship is coming from the water, the ship was 1,500 people -- 1,200 people was going down in New York, you know. And 300 was coming to New Orleans. The 300 was going to Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Montreal, you know, all of the _____, and I suppose to go to Corsicana. It's coming, the -- the Jewish -- comes a Jewish woman, gave us a nice welcome. They make a nice dinner that day, would you like a certain 1949 was. Come in the evening, looking for the people to go come on, one lady say, "You going to Corsicana, Texas?" I say, "Yes." "You are _____ down there, you know." I say, "Yes." "If you wanted, you can stay here in New Orleans." I say, "Why?" "See, because Corsicana, Texas is a small town, you know, 90 percent farmers. And I don't know that you can find a nice job over there." I said, "Lady, it make no difference where I'll going because I have nobody to look -- I have nobody in my family." She say, "Why do you say that?" I said, "Because I know that I come from a family with 78 people, and I know nobody is alive, just I'm the one. I was looking, you know." She say, "Okay. Do you want to stay?" I say, "All right." "You see, here you have a _____, you got a lot of stores, from _____ shops, there you can find a job." "All right." Until now, I don't know where who pay me five months rent, \$50. I got a room, it was in the back, in a garage they make one room. At night, I pull out the bed, I got a bedroom. In the morning, I pull the bed, I got in the same room, the living room, the dining room, and the kitchen. If ever you wanted, I got the same room. I got a little piece of ice box, that you buy for 15 cents a piece of ice to put in there, you know. And a little small stove, a 20-inch stove, you know. And that's all. Well, still my son was a year old, I was staying -- I haven't seen nobody to come in and ask if I need something, if I need a little milk for the child, there was nobody. And then five days, six days, seven days, on the eighth day, I say, "I'm going out get _____." She said, "Where are you going? You get lost. Don't go down that, don't get lost." I'm going out, I look at the sign, I see the names in the street, Brown Street. And I walk, I walk. I come to a corner, now I know where it is. I come back home, I see a big sign saying "the tailor." I stay in _____, I see a tall man, an old man and he -- he looked up. He want to talk to me, but he has a customer. And I wait a few minutes and I walk away from him, I walk away from him, I come to a big street. I see a streetcar running in the middle of the street, buses, so many stores, _____, there's Canal Street, that's an _____ Street for New Orleans. I take a right -- a left and I walk and I found a place and I see a railroad track -- railroad track and I stopped. I stop, I don't know where to go. And I say, "She was right. She was right. I'm lost." I take a left and I walk, I come to a corner, I see no people, no nothing. I see the railroad tracks, but I see a black guy across the street. And I stay on the corner and wait. He comes over to me he talks to me. While we're talking, I realized he asked me where I want to go. And I answer him, "Brown (ph.), Brown." And he understands I want a Brown Street." And he's showing me the fingers one, two, three, go left, and then -- and I follow what he told me and I come back -- I come back up on Brown Street on purpose, to _____ the tailor. Then I see the tailor, I said -- and he called me in, and he talked to me -- the Jewish man, he talked to me. And he asked me if I

can work. And I tell him all about it. I tell him. He said, "If you want it, I can help you get a job." He was very nice. "You come tomorrow, 12 o'clock. We go out and eat lunch." I don't know what means lunch, you know. "And then, I'm going to help you get a job." The next day, I was there and we go out and _____ was across the street, to the next block, in the corner was there a little booth with hamburgers and hot dogs and he ordered two hamburgers, 12 cents a hamburger, and a little coke, a nickel. He said, "Let's go eat." I said, "Where?" "Come with me." We go around the booth and we stayed and we eat it. He said, "Now, come let's go on Canal Street and get a job." We go to one place and two places, one say _____ -- one say _____. Can I get it -- but the one man say, "I don't need nobody. I handle already-made clothes, you know. And I got a Spanish lady whenever I need to put in labor work, I _____." "That's all right." "You cannot make a living through me, I cannot use you. But go there on this and this street to the _____, and the _____ is the biggest company in town, and they need a man because I know they got a man operator -- the machine operator, he left. He want a raise. He was making \$60 for five days, 35 hours a week, you know, and he left. And there you can find a job." I said, "Okay." I'm going over with this man and this man was not -- he can speak English too, you know, he come in, he say, "Good morning. Good morning." And he point at me with a finger, he say, "Refugee, refugee, he needs a job. Refugee." And the man looked at him and he take the phone and call a man come down from the 10th floor or the 5th floor, and he told me to go on up to the shop and going up in the elevator, he talked to me, I cannot answer. I don't understand not one word. But we come up, he give me a piece of skin, the cloth, he told me to sit down _____ with a finger, you know what I mean? And I sit down with the machine and he saw that and he -- good. Okay. And then, I show him that I cannot talk, but I saw that he had a blade, I took the blade -- I took the blade and I show him how to cut in and _____. I show him I can _____. I show him I can trim it and I can sew everything. And he goes down to talk to the boss and they tell him, you know, and the boss say, "Yes, tell him to come in tomorrow." I come tomorrow, come to work Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Four days I work and get me an envelope, I open up -- not in the shop, but I go on down there in the street -- I open it up, I see I got \$21 and a few cents, not even 50 cents an hour. Four days, eight hours a day, you know, is 32 hours. Not even 50 cents an hour, but I was happy. I come back Monday. I work a whole week, six days. I work Saturday. I work -- I got the same thing, \$25. He take off Social Security and tax. It's the same thing.

Q: I don't mean to interrupt you, but it's five after one.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you want to stop?

A: Okay. One minute.

Q: Okay. It's up to you.

A: Well, anyway -- anyway, I was working over there and I got a raise, not that time. After -- after a year I got a raise, ten dollars. And they don't want to raise me no more and I find me a job for \$85 in five days, you know. And I bought me a machine -- two machines, a sewing machine and a _____ machine. And I put it on, I get somebody to write me down a piece of cardboard and I put it on the window where I used to live. A European _____ repairs and remodels. And when I come out I don't want to give up the job. And I was -- then, in the evening, I was working, you know, there. And so I help myself. Nobody was helping, you know, with one penny. And thank God, I raised two children. I got a son, a lawyer -- a good lawyer, you know, an honest man. And my daughter -- my daughter got a Master's degree from MIT. She got a -- and I'm happy that -- mostly happy that two children that raised in a nice way, you know, and I am happy, too. I sure thank you.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

End of Tape #4

Conclusion of Interview