

**The following is an interview with Mr. Simon Cymerint on the evening of June 8, 1982 at his home in Oak Park, Michigan. The interviewer is Sidney Bolkosky.**

**Uh, could you tell me your name please and where you're from?**

My name is uh, Simon Cymerint and I was born in Poland. The, the city is Ostrowiec. And uh, then we moved. When I was seven years old we moved to another city, Bieśnik Starowicea [Starowice].

**Can you spell that for me?**

Starowicea [Starowice] is uh, S-T- uh, A-R-O-W-I-C-E-A. Starowicea [Starowice].

**All right, tell me something about... So, you were brought up in Starowicea [Starowice].**

Hm? Starowicea [Starowice], yeah.

**Tell me something about your family and the...**

Like...

**town that you were brought up in.**

The town had about twenty-five thousand Jewish people. We had about three beautiful synagogues, the city. And uh, we had a lot of relatives. Everybody was in the same city, my relatives, from uh, my father's side and from my mother's side.

**Okay, do you know how big the town was altogether?**

The town was uh, population was about thirty-five thousand people.

**So, the majority were Jews.**

Not the majority, no, no. It was a lot of uh, Gentile people.

**Was it... The total population was thirty-five thousand.**

Yeah.

**And how many, how many Jews?**

Jewish people was about uh, twenty thousand.

**All right. Uh, and how large was your family?**

My family was uh, just my own family was five children and uh, father and mother, plus a lot of relatives from both sides, from my father's and from my mother's side.

**Where were you in the family? Were you the youngest?**

I was the second. My sister was older, but uh, she's dead.

**From your immediate family that you had...**

I got only one brother left.

**All the others were killed in the war?**

Yeah.

**How large would you say the extended family was? Aunts, uncles, cousins.**

Oh.

**Grandparents.**

At least, between forty and forty-five uh, people.

**And how many s... survived the war?**

Just me and my brother.

**Uh, what did your father do?**

My father had uh, a shoe store, selling shoes. I'm going to bring it out later... See my uncle was a painting contractor. That's the reason I survived the Holocaust,

because I learned the trade when I was twelve years old. When I came in the concentration camp, they needed trades. That's the reason I pushed through the concentration camp. I knew the trade because I learned before the war.

**Was your family um, Orthodox? Did you go to shul regularly?**

Oh yeah.

**You went to cheder?**

I went to cheder since I was four years old actually 'til I was Bar Mitzvah, I went to cheder. And uh, I uh, learned you know, and I belonged to the uh, Shomer Ha-Tsa'ir. That's an organization uh, for Israel. You know, in the future, somebody wants to go or... So, I had the upbringing. My grandfather was highly educated in uh, Jewish law, so I went to good rabbi uh, cheders you know, and I got a good Jewish education.

**So, did you, you didn't go to public school then, you went to...**

Public school too.

**I mean...**

Afterwards, after public school, the uh, cheder started around four o'clock 'til about eight o'clock in... at night.

**The public school was a, with...**

Polish.

**Jews and non-Jews together.**

Together.

**Do you remember what... when you were in school any anti-Semitic incidents?**

Yes uh, all the time. This, this you can't forget because since I started first uh, grade school, we were always... The minute we come... came out from school, they chased us with stones and, you know, Polish kids, and all kind of names and... This was going on all the time. And when we told the teacher that the Polish kids, you know, beat us up and... He didn't say nothing because he, he was Polish. He's not going to stick up for me. He sticked up... He says, "Well, I can't do nothing about it." That's all... This was the answer. 'Til we got about uh, ten, eleven years old, we started to fight back. You know.

**Do you remember any specific times when that happened when you...**

This, it was not specific time, it was all the time. Was no... Even neighbors.

When we went, the same kids, we lived close by, and still they, they brought it up, you know, all the time call dirty names, dirty Jews and stuff like that.

**Did you have any non-Jewish friends?**

Well, not close, not close friends actually. Only from school, you know.

**Did you bring them home? Did you go to their house?**

Well I... No. Because of, the reason we didn't go is of the, the food, you know.

We tried it one time uh, and uh, they told us always at home, you're not supposed to eat the traif, you know, and the chazzar and stuff like that. No food. But when they came to my house, they ate. I mean, they ate everything. So, this was the difference. But still, I can't forget the uh, always the, the fear. We were afraid to go at night, you know, that we shouldn't get beat up. We always had to go with... not alone, never. Always with a group.

**Did your father have Jewish, non-Jewish business associates?**

Well, yeah. He dealt most with uh, people uh, working people, you know, came to the store and uh, because you know, in Europe was like that. You had to give uh, on credit. And the only on credit, was the Jewish people gave on credit. A Polish store never... Everything was cash. But Jewish people put it on book, on the book. Uh, when he got the check, let's see uh, two weeks in Europe they get paid, every two weeks you know, the first and the fifteenth. So, they came and if they didn't have the whole amount to pay him, so they paid something, you know. And still they got credit. They took shoes again, both shoes and uh, and paid up little, whatever they could. Five dollar, two dollar, a dollar, you know. This was the only time they came to a Jew's store. Because Jews... It was even signs. Jews, if you go to a Jew, he gives you on credit. If you go to a Gentile, you got to have cash. Even the same people, the mentality, you know. They put up signs all over the city. The Jews give you on credit, Polish no credit, cash. But that's the way life was going on, you know, in, in European countries.

**You said you went out; you would go out in groups too. Was there a theater, movies, what kind of...**

Yeah.

**things did you do before the war?**

It wa... was theaters, was uh, movies. We went to the movie, sure. Yeah.

**Yiddish theater?**

Uh, was one Jewish uh, Yiddish theater, you know, one theater. But uh, the rest was all movie houses like here.

**Were there American movies?**

No, the movies was uh, from uh, German movies or Polish movies, no Americans. Very seldom. We saw... Maybe all the time since they took me away, you know, maybe I saw two movies. The movies was, only cowboys movies. That, that type of a movie, you know.

**Uh, what, what kind of education did you get? How far in school did you go and...**

I uh, I went, actually here they would call uh, finished high school. Polish...

**Secular high, secular education.**

Yeah.

**What would you have become?**

Well, and then was college, but I couldn't reach that... That's was too, you know, they took me away. Wha... The college, then you made up your mind. You could have become a, a, a doctor, a lawyer, a dentist, you know, same thing like this country.

**Would you have gone ahead into college, do you think?**

Yeah.

**Your family would have...**

Yes, my family could, uh... That's what their, their basis were to give me a, an education, see, to send me to college.

**And what about the, the Zionist group that you belonged to? Would you have gone to Israel at some point?**

Well, this was just a group to belong as a, a, a chalutz, maybe you know what chalutz is?

**Well, explain what a chalutz is.**

A chalutz is... In Europe, a lot of Polish boys went to Israel. A chalutz, that means you, you stay uh, for two years you work, you chop wood, you carry water in pails to people and you make a few dollar and you learn how to work hard. Because that time it was pioneers, you know, like forty years ago. Pioneers went and they didn't have nothing. They had to start out in the fields, digging, and, you know, and all that later. And this was the preparation, they showed films. I saw films before the war when I was a kid. I saw films from Israel. At that time was no Israel.

**Palestine.**

Palestine. But they showed the, the, the Sinai. They showed all the mountains, all... Everything so clear, you know. And I had in my mind to go to Israel. I wanted to go to Israel. But was no possibility, you know.

**When... Tell me something. What, what would a uh, Friday night be like in your house?**

Friday night was strict shabbat. Shabbos, you know, we didn't go with... The store was closed on Shabbos. We went Friday night to shul, we came home and my father made Kiddush and we all ate, the whole family. And the same thing uh, Saturday. Saturday morning we went to shul, came home twelve o'clock, and we ate dinner. And uh, in the evening was like uh ??? you know. We had, that the Shabbos is over on... like Oneg Shabbat, you know. Shabbat is over then uh, is, in the evening, is like you drink a little wine and, and uh, we, we light a candle.

**Havdalah.**

Havdalah, yeah.

**Would you have just your immediate family in the house or would...**

Just, just the immediate family. The only time we invited uh, like uh, to seder, you know, somebody didn't have a family. We got together, you know, two, three families and we made seder, you know, in each house. One night in our house and uh, the next time in the other family's house, you know, exchanged.

**Were you a close family?**

Very close, very close. I had a grandmother, she was about a hundred and four years old... I'll never forget that. She couldn't see, but each child when we came there to her house Saturday—I'll never forget—she recognized each child by the voice. She said the names, you know. She, she couldn't see. She was ninety-four years old. When she died she was hundred and five.

**When did she die?**

She died maybe two years... She died in 1937.

**Before the war.**

Two years before, of old age.

**Do you know about any political activity in the, in your town? Or was anybody in your family a member of the Bund, a...**

No, we never mixed in uh, that type of, uh... No way. Because it was a religious family. You know, religious people didn't believe in those organizations.

**What about Polish politics? Did your father ever talk about what's going on in Poland?**

No, no. Never. Never mixed into politics because it was just, it would be a waste because a Jew, very few Jews, you know, belonged to the Polish... You could...



Maybe one in a city was in that government, as a councilman. I remember one person because he had a bank and uh, because of his prestige, you know, he got in. But otherwise, no chance.

**Let me, let's talk about when the war began a little bit.**

Yeah.

**Do you remember where you were when you heard that the war had started?**

Sure.

**Where? I mean, precise place and how you heard.**

Uh, the... We heard that uh, you know, when the uh, in the papers and on the radio that uh, Germany crossed uh, Poland, Gdansk, this was Gdinya, you know, Gdansk. And uh, they keep going and, you know, and the Polish, there's no way. And everybody shouldn't run away from the cities. Everybody should stay put and uh, the Germans are not going to bomb. The only thing they're going to bomb is factories. But meanwhile they didn't touch one factory, the Germans. Didn't bombed at all because the whole world took about two weeks and the Germans were already in Poland. When they stepped in, it took about maybe a month. And they started up right away uh, counting it, that the Jews got to uh, go and uh, register in the Jewish community and report to work everyday. Shoveling snow uh, sweep the streets, you know, right away they start with local work for the Germans because the Germans were occupied. You know, they took big buildings and they got in and they needed working people.

**And you had to register then with the community council?**

With the, with the Jewish community because the Jewish community had to supply to the German headquarters how many they need. Today they need three hundred Jews, tomorrow five hundred. Whatever they needed, but we had to be registered in the Jewish community.

**Who registered you?**

It was officials uh, Jewish, uh...

**Jewish officials.**

Everything was Jews.

**People who were already leaders of the community.**

Leaders of the community from before, the same thing. They made them responsible, the Germans made them responsible. For every need, they're not going to look for uh, private, you know. The only time they looked for uh, they did it on their own when we started to uh, wear those uh, Star of David.

**The armbands.**

The armbands. Then they didn't need a Jewish community. When they saw us in the street, come on, come on. Los, up, you know, on the uh, on the truck and they took us.

**You mean they were pick... You were picked up off the street?**

A lot of times.

**Tell me what happened after that...**

Well...

**when they picked you up.**

when they picked me up, they took me to work uh, let's see, about five miles or four miles away on a truck. And I worked. I worked there whatever they gave me to do. Shining there all the shoes, you know, the boots. Uh, cleaning the rooms, the headquarters, you know, what they, the, the Germans were occupying. And uh, all kind of uh, dirty work, and in the evening about six o'clock they sent us home, walk, walking. So, we had to, you know, come running and walking home. No pay, no food, nothing.

**Were you guarded when you went home, or they just sent you home on your own?**

On, on our own. This was the first few months, nobody was guarded. Uh, three months later, they took us... Everybody had to give up the house and they had already prepared three streets and they made like a little ghetto. So, one day, we couldn't take nothing. Just we got, you know, it was so fast, they gave us like ten, fifteen minutes and we had to go that destination, you know. They told us the streets and we went there and we had a room. One room like this was about three, four families. We all slept on the floors. There was no, there was one bath but the rest was not... It was a wooden floor; it wasn't carpeted. It was a wooden floor and we all lay there on that, at night, you know, on that floor. And they start to uh, they gave us uh, like a ration in the Jewish community like a little, like a book, card, rations, you know.

**Ration book.**

A ration book and so, so much for a family, like a pound of bread a day and uh, five gram of uh, sugar, you know, and a small piece of margarine. It wasn't enough to live. Very poor life. We couldn't get out no place. We were surrounded

in those three blocks. Now. Then they gave an order. Who is going to uh, register in Hermann Göring worker for work. The group age is from fifteen to uh, forty, for an example. Then the parents are going to be saved in the ghettos if he going to work in the factory. This is ???arbeitslager, they called it. Forced labor camp. And uh, we got registered. And you, you want to save the family, and, and when you work they gave us an additional card in the factory for myself, but it was more than the whole family we had all together because this was a different setup already. It was like uh, you work for the government, for the German government. Okay, we worked there. And about two months later, they took us away from that factory...

**Where was the factory?**

The factory was in Starowicea [Starowice]...

**Had it been there?**

in that city.

**Had it been there before?**

Oh yeah.

**They took over a factory?**

A lot of factories in my city particularly. Otherwise, in Europe it wasn't too many, in every city was not too many factories. But that city, Starowicea [Starowice], was a lot of ammunition uh, ammo... ammunition, that means ammunition factory.

**Stalburgen.**

Stal... Yeah. They, they, it was uh, foundries. See, I worked in a foundry. What they made from all kind of uh, uh, materials. They poured in, in that oven and that melt for iron. They call it a foundry; here they call it foundry.

**Let me ask you, did the, did the um, did the Germans seize factories and then they became the Herman Göring Works?**

Sure.

**They just confiscated.**

Confiscated right away.

**Was this the Wehrmacht or the SS?**

No, this was the uh, the German government. It was no troops take over. Civilian Germans came from Berlin, but they owned factories there, see. The only thing you need is a director of the factory. A, a, a manager will take up the idea, you know, how to be in a plant. But no uh, military was in the factory at all. The only thing what they guarded us, they put guards, Ukrainians, in Ukrainian uniforms and they, they were the guards, but no SS.

**Now when you were on the, on the uh, forced labor gangs and you were picked up on the trucks?**

Yeah, this was, this was all military.

**Was it Wehrmacht?**

No, SS troops.

**Okay.**

Gestapo and SS troops and SA. The ???, the yellow shirts with the swastikas, okay. But in the factories was all civilian engineers, you know, they had the

authority. A big sign was on the factory, Herman Göring Worker. That means Hermann Göring's factories. And we, and after two, three months we worked there, we couldn't... All of a sudden, a truck came and we got loaded up on that, those trucks. They called us the names, you know. We went out, outside the trucks was standing already. This was SS troops. And los, los, fast. We go up, we went up on those trucks and they took us to a train and we wind up in Lublin.

**This was in 1940?**

In 1940.

**Do you remember when in 1940?**

In 1940, it was in summertime, about uh, September, let's say. And they took us on trains, from the trucks to trains and by train, open trains like for cattle, you know, cars. Not closed uh, passenger trains, but open trains uh, transport trains, you know, and they loaded us up and they took us to uh, uh, Lublin. Lublin...

**The city of Lublin.**

The city of Lublin about fifteen mile outskirts, Lipova 7 was the uh, that camp.

**The labor camp?**

A labor camp. And this was already built when the Germans took over, you know. That camp was built by the Germans during the time they were occupying. And then they took us to the border. That time they were expecting some war with the, with Russia. So, we were building uh, digging trenches for, for the Germans to hide. ??? they called it, you know. And uh, we worked there and it was terrible. We were standing to here in, in that mud and water. Terrible. A lot of them died in a short time. And I managed to run away. With all the guards, I run away from

the camp. I met a Jewish guy from Lublin. He was a roof... Uh, fixing roofs, a roof layer, you know. And I got acquainted with him and I told him I want to... I'm going to take a chance to run away. He says, okay. He says, "Meet me tomorrow morning and I'll give you a bundle of..." He could, he was from the city. He wasn't in the camp. He was from Lublin, a contractor like, you know. He can, he could take out ten men and bring back, you know. And he knew the guard already. He says, if you... But, he says, "Where you gonna go?" He says, "I got a place for you." I wanted, I wanted to go in, in a forest because, you know, I figure in Europe if you go in a forest you can reach, it takes you a few weeks, but you can reach another cities. Everything. From one forest to the other. It's the only thing you cross like a, a highway, you know, the road. And you got, get in another forest and then you go away. I run again. He gave me a bundle of shingles and he told me, he says, "Listen, you drop the shingles... You have to go up because the guard is watching, you know. You're going to walk a block and then you go to Lubartowska 12, there's a rabbi lives there. You knock on the door and he'll hide you and he'll, he'll, he's going to arrange it uh, that somebody should take you back to your hometown," like to Starowicea [Starowice]. And I went to that rabbi. He hid me out and uh, two days later... But still, everything was risky. But I was lucky, I still had my blonde, light hair. Because on the road... See, I went with a guy... In Europe, they travel from one city to the other with sugar and flour, sackful, you know, a hundred pound sack. They, they transport, you know, from Lublin to Ost... to Starowicea [Starowice] they were carrying product. Do you understand? That time it wasn't that much restricted yet, you know. Some

cities was no ghettos. Some cities they made ghettos right away. Lublin was an open city. Nobody from that city was in the camp. They all lived in the cities, they all had stores yet, you know. Nothing was confiscated, but a camp. They brought people from other cities to that, to that city.

**Did you know about Majdanek then?**

Majdanek?

**Majdanek.**

Majdanek, I heard when I was already, when I came to Auschwitz. In Poland, we didn't hear nothing about Majdanek. We knew Auschwitz is existing, you know. This was the only camp we heard about, but no Majdanek. Majdanek started when they go... when they made the Judenrein, that means just...

**??? right, okay.**

out, later. So, I managed to come home. Lucky, I don't know how, because on the roads SS, stormtroopers uh, Gestapo were riding and patrolling and, you know, and I was with that guy, the guy was like a farmer, you know, with a horse and wagon. And didn't... Just lucky it didn't check identification. If they would check the i... the identification, they, they got me right there. But this what you take the chance by running away. So, I came back home, to the ghetto.

**Let me ask you a quick, just a second.**

Yeah.

**In all these labor details from the beginning when they took you, when they pick you up off the streets all the way to this, up to this...**

Yeah.



**point, what kind of treatment did you see or did you experience yourself?**

The treatments right away was no good. When we came to Lublin, see, there's so much to talk about it, when we came the first day. We were outside. The camp was already a lot of people there. But the first thing they took us to a little shack and each one of 'em, they gave me a, a, a wire and a piece of wood, and the minute I hold the wire he says ??? you know, I should roll that piece of wire on that wood. And they contact it and, and, and, and I got electric... like shocks, electric shocks. Everybody, no reason. This was that you should be afraid and obey whatever they tell you. Later we found out from the other people they were there already, you know. They told 'em, everybody's got to go through those shocks. But the shocks is so... It's not a, a killer, but it's terrible, you know, like, you, you stick your finger sometimes, you have that experience? I have plenty of times because I do painting... Electricity, you know. The minute you start to put the wire it, it shakes you up terrible. And then they plug it and unplug it. It's not a high voltage, otherwise it would, you would be killed right away, you know. But it, it shakes you up terrible. And then from then on you, you, you're afraid.

You're afraid for your own shadow.

**Were people being beaten? Or ???**

Well, I wasn't too long there to see. But I heard later, yeah, they were beating and kicking when they went out to work, when they came home.

**Starowicea [Starowice] was...**

Starowicea [Starowice] was a, a factory. Then they were building, uh... I, I went back to work again. Again to a factory. I got myself in an office and I registered

that I want to work for the uh, for the factory. And they registered. They registered. See, this was already forgotten from before I worked there too, you know.

**Same factory?**

The same factory. And I went back in that factory and I worked there 'til they were building already regular barracks. And in between they started already with uh, Judenrein to chase out from the ghettos. In that camp, that uh, forced labor camp was a permanent camp they made. And then they brought from all around Starowicea [Starowice], from all around the little cities, Radom, Kielce, Skarzysko, they brought... This was a big uh, camp they were building. They expected it, you know, to clean out Jews from around the area, a lot uh, uh, from a lot of vicinities. And they brought 'em to our camp. It was a permanent camp and then we all, by guard, we marched to work to, to the factories. Didn't get paid. Only we got is a piece of bread in the morning in the camp and twelve o'clock we had a soup in the factory and a soup when we came home in the evening, six o'clock.

**You were living at home still?**

No.

**You were living in the camp.**

That's all.

**What happened to your family?**

They make... The parents was already went away to Majdanek, to Treblinka.

**How did they... to Treblinka? Tell me how that happened.**

This is happened uh, we couldn't, they didn't let us anymore go home. We were already guarded in the camp. But it was a... The city wasn't that big. We heard the next day that there is no Jews, all the families were taken on trains. We even saw in our camp, it was built, it was built on a, on a high level. We saw, from the barracks, we saw trains, trains day and night going by with people sticking out and, you know, it was, it was in summer, hot. They sticked in about—that's what I heard—hundred, hundred and fifty, 'til they came to Treblinka they were half already uh, dead, choke.

**In the cattle cars.**

In the, in the cattle cars. So, that's the last time I never, I never seen my family. I know the family went to Treblinka.

**So, you were taken from them, really? You were all together and then they came and took you from the house, is that what happened?**

Yeah. They took me away and this was the end. I've never seen the parents, that's all. And I was already in that uh, uh, forced labor camp, Starowicea [Starowice], and the cities were cleared up, all the ghettos were no Jews at all. And a matter of fact, in this camp they brought a lot of people from other camps and they told me the same thing, the parents they took away and all young boys, you know, because old people very seldom came to the camp. Because I know my father wasn't, wasn't old, he was a young man, but he always said, whatever, we all go together. Because I had a little brother ten years old and my mother was a young woman. He says, whatever it's going to be, we all go together. We not going to get separated. So us, me and, and, and two brothers, you know, they took and they

were separating us not to keep in even the same camp, the same barrack, I mean. Different barracks. Too... Even brothers. They, they managed brothers shouldn't be together.

**You think they did this deliberately to have the brothers...**

Definitely.

**When they came... Did they come to your house to get you? When they took you to the, to the barracks, to the camp?**

One... Yeah. They came at night and, you know, it was like uh, I don't know in English how to, uh... Like a raid. Exactly. A raid.

**Were these Ukrainians who got you?**

Ukrainians and SS troops came. They, they knew the ghetto, you know, the, the, the three blocks, that's all. And they run in, they said, the uh, young boys, dress and out in, in five minutes.

**Five minutes to get out.**

That's all. So, we hardly could get dressed and, and that, this was the end. I remember my mother was crying and my father was crying and, and, you know, hysterical, but they, you know, pushed 'em back and, and you know and us took right away on trucks and they took us to those uh, that uh, forced labor camp. This was end. I didn't see the parents anymore. And a few days later they were, the city was gone.

**When did you find out where they had gone?**

Uh, you know, when you work in a factory there was Polish people there and they were free. They were in the cities, you know, and they saw, if not they, their

relatives, they saw it. And they told me that, that day and night that took about three days in the whole city was not one Jew left. Everybody was in, in the cattle cars, and they, and they know exactly where they sent them.

**Treblinka. This was 1941, right?**

Yeah, in 1941.

**Did they tell you Treblinka right then? Did they give you the name?**

They told me that's under uh, between uh, the German-Ukrainian border, Treblinka. They knew exactly because they had connection, they had, they listened to radios, you know, and... They were free.

**What did they tell you they were being taken for?**

Nothing. Just... They didn't know what happened. Just every Jew they take, they took all the Jews as clean, Judenrein they called it, free from Jews.

**What did you think was going to happen to them?**

The uh, the goyim?

**No, what did you think was going to happen to...**

Oh.

**your family and the other Jews?**

We didn't know. We didn't know that they going to be... They were talking about when we were still home that the, Germany's going to take every Jew in different camps and they're going to stay in camps and work 'til the war is complete, built up again, you know. When the Germany's going to be built up, then they let 'em out free. But meanwhile, they all going to be in camps working for the uh, for the Germans. They're going to eat, they're going to have places where to sleep, but

not free in houses and camps. But not mass uh, murder. This, this, nobody... But they, today we hear that, that, you know, that the transports, they go straight to Treblinka and Treblin... Treblinka's no factories, there's nothing there, there's camps, elimination camps. That's the reason that time we knew that the parents are not alive anymore.

**You heard it even then in 1940?**

Right then and there, because there's always somebo... Somebody jumped from the trains. He was a shochet. Know what a shochet is?

**A butcher, slaughterer.**

A shochet, yeah, he, he, he cuts chickens. Okay. He jumped and he came to our camp in that uh, Starowicea [Starowice] from close by Treblinka. He lost his family and a daughter and... But he, he jumped and I don't know how and he got dressed like a farmer, you know, he was blonde. Uh, he didn't look like a Jew, you know, he was blonde and he came back and got into our camp and he told us that he was close. And he saw the camp almost, you know. And nobody, he says, is going to live because they all go to, to die in that Treblinka. That's exactly what happened. So, we got... Now Starowicea [Starowice], I was in Starowicea [Starowice] 'til 19 uh, '43. In 1943, they eliminate the camps and they took us from Treblinka, from uh, Starowicea [Starowice] to Auschwitz. Buna.

**Not back to Lublin, you went to Auschwitz.**

Auschwitz.

**Can I ask you a question...**

Yeah.

**about Starowicea [Starowice]? Um, were you ever involved in loading trains? Ostbahn trains, freight trains at all? You just worked in the Herman Göring Works?**

Yeah.

**Did you hear of any sabotage going on?**

No. Maybe sabotage was going on the underground from uh, uh, Polish underground. When the Germans stepped in, a lot of went to the forest.

[interruption in interview]

Yeah.

**Was there talk of resistance in the, in the factory or the camp that you worked in?**

**Did anybody talk about resistance or escaping?**

We talked and uh, we did because they said in Starowicea [Starowice] that we going to Auschwitz, and Ausch... Auschwitz is uh, elimination, I mean, ovens. So, we took that chance and the minute we started out, a lot of got... That night was a massacre. A lot of from our people got shot by the gate because the uh, the uh, what do you call, the, the posts, you know, they stay on, uh...

**Watchtowers.**

the watchtowers. They always with reflectors, you know, all around the uh, the gates. And the minute they saw by the gates, we got already organized that we shouldn't go in groups, but singles, you know, whatever. And we're going to cut that wire, and the minute the wire is cut we go through in, in the, in the forest and we get together with the uh, underground, with the Polish underground. Didn't work. They spotted us and they started to shoot, you know. And everybody who

was still alive run back, you know, in the, in the barrack. And the next morning... In that, the same night, what they shot a lot of 'em, in the same night they were calling for more guards and they surrounded the uh, the whole camp and the next day trucks came—they didn't want to take no more chances, you know—and they took us and straight to uh, Auschwitz.

**And you said they had, they had told you about ovens at Auschwitz. Who, who had told you about this?**

The uh, in, in the factory. The, the uh, Polish...

**The Polish...**

Polish people they said Auschwitz is built crematoriums. Nobody, who goes to Auschwitz, this is going to be, this is it. So, you can imagine the fear, you know. We came to Auschwitz. The first we came is to Buna. This is a, a, a small part of Auschwitz. We didn't know, you know. I know now, we didn't know at that time what happened, why would they took us to uh, Buna. Buna was to a sortation place. Uh, they took trades, you know. Plumbers, electricians, shoemakers, painters, one side. Who doesn't have a trade in the other side. So, most of them they were right away sent to the ovens who didn't have a trade. Right away. And who uh, was a tradesman they sent us straight to Auschwitz.

**To build. Was this in Monowitz?**

Monociv. Monivic, yeah. In Monowitz was the IG ????. The IG uh, craft. They were uh, making uh, paint uh, they were making gasoline there. All kind of chemicals and, you know, each paint is like, you know... I work there uh, like uh, whatever iron has to be painted, all kind of uh, colors, grey or red. This was my



department, you know. And uh, and this was daily routine, back and forth you go, you know, until they started in 1944, they started to bomb day and night those factories. The ??? the ??? they called it. We were standing... And since then, no more painting. They gave us uh, clean up commando, aufren, aufren commando they called it. But we saw a sign already. In 1944, we saw a sign, something is happening already, you know. After all, we didn't see nothing, like the whole world would not exist, just the Germans. But in '44, we saw planes. We didn't know what kind of planes, but we saw planes bombing, so we knew this was not German planes. And that time all the, the Polish people in the factories said now it's going to be the end because they bombed... They, they were bombing cities, the railroads. English planes uh, Russian planes, and American planes. On three shifts, they were coming and going. But still it took more than a year for it to be liberated. They were bombing day and night.

**Were you ever in Auschwitz 1? In the other camp, the other Auschwitz camp?**

The main?

**Yeah.**

The main Auschwitz, yeah.

**You were, but you were, were you living in the barracks in Monowitz?**

Yeah.

**What about Birkenau? Did you ever get to go to...**

Birk...no, in Birkenau we were standing maybe a, a few days. And from Birkenau they sent us to Mono...Monowitz.

**To Monowitz, I see.**

So, this wasn't a working camp there. I told you, this was just, a transport came to Bu... to uh, Buna and uh, and they picked what they need and sent to uh, Monowitz, Auschwitz.

**Could I just step back for a minute?**

Yeah go ahead.

**Tell me about the transport. You said they took you by train in a cattle car. How many...**

From, from uh, from Starowicea [Starowice]?

**Starowicea [Starowice]. How many were you in a cattle...?**

This was... The camp was about fifteen thousand people.

**And how many per car?**

The car got in about more than a hundred people. And when we came to Buna, and the transport came in, half, more the half from the fifteen thousand, more than half was dead in the, in the cattle cars. Because it was hot...

**How long were you in the cattle...?**

I was in the cattle car about... It didn't took long. A night and a day. The next, the next day in the afternoon, I was already in Buna.

**What did you do for uh, sanitary facilities?**

Nothing. On top.

**On top of each other.**

It was a little window and who was stronger tried, you know. It was like sardines. It was in July. The heat was unbelievable. We were just burned up, you know, for thirst. And, and who didn't have any uh, strength fell down. This is like a jungle,

a jungle. And the other stepped on it that he could reach because the window was high. It was just a little window in that, in that cattle car. And who was short couldn't reach it. But half of the people, some whole tra... whole uh, a whole wagon, cattle were, were, came and they only opened the doors and unloaded dead people. I've never seen in my whole life something like it, you know, how in a day and a half what could happen to people in that heat and no air and no water and no facilities. Like flies. One stepped on each other. Just a miracle. I don't know how I survived. I wasn't that, you know, big of a man. Just pure luck, I don't know.

**When the doors first opened at Auschwitz, what was the first thought...**

The first...

**that you had? What did you see first, what did you hear, smell?**

Nothing. The first... When the train came in it was, it looked to me like a forest. And it looked. because the train, the, the track was going through and, and both sides was trees. And we were unloaded in that little area. But further we started, you know, they started to chase us. Then we came in already to that, to that gate in the uh, Auschwitz, "Arbeit Macht Frei," it was a big sign. It was the uh, iron, big iron gate, "Arbeit Macht Frei." So, we still didn't know, you know, if that's true, if they got real ovens, you know. Now we are in uh, yeah, in Auschwitz. And when they chased us in in those barracks, first they told us we going to take uh, you're going ??? taking a bath. And this I heard already that if they, they, they tell you you're going to take a bath you'll never come out from there. But it wasn't in our case. We got in, they gave us a piece of soap. We got in, we took a bath and

we left all our, we, we had civilian clothes in those camps, in Starowicea [Starowice]. And over there we went out the other door and we had already the striped uh, a, a jacket and a pair of pants and that's it.

**Were you shaved too?**

Right away in the, in the uh, we, we took that, that bath, you know. Those barbers right away shaved off complete hair.

**Prisoners, barbers?**

Yeah. And after that they took us to the barracks and in the barracks was already uh, inside was like uh, a Blockälteste. He was the, the uh, leader of that uh, barrack.

**Also a prisoner?**

Each barrack... He was a German. But those, those were the worst. This was all... It wasn't uh, regular Germans, this was Germans what Hitler got 'em locked up uh, homosexuals uh, uh, murderers. They got those positions to oversee, overseers, you know, on us. All those Blockältestes, you know, they called them. They got all the authority. They could kill a person and throw 'em away and without any explanations to the Germans. They had all the authority. The only time, when we marched out, then we had the SS guarding us with machine guns every morning.

**This for Appell. Was there Appell in the morning, the roll?**

Appel, Appellplatz. We got up, you know, the morning about five thirty, six o'clock, who knows, we didn't have no watches, but it was in the wintertime, still dark. Dark outside. And we stood outside 'til it got a little bit light. First they gave

us in the morning uh, uh, ersatz coffee in a ??? that means in a little uh, dish. You know, we, that dish, that's all we had. And a piece of bread, very thin, in the morning. And this 'til twelve o'clock, and twelve o'clock we had a soup, Buna soup, they called it. And when we came back to the camp we had another soup. And this was the daily food.

### **Were people starving to death there?**

Everyday. Everyday you could see walking around in the camps, swollen. Most they were swollen. I don't know what... And after the swelling they were not the same person. See, I was with mine age of uh, boys, you know. And the minute they started to, to swell up, day to day they looked like different, different people. Their feet was, you know. And plus this, they made selection. Every Sunday, we had to get undressed in the barracks and who was like... I'm just explaining to you about that uh, you know, the swelling. Who was swollen they took away. Each had a card, you know, the, the number, this number. Like uh, a file, you know. So when they came in you had a card with this number in your hand. When the uh, SS man, that doctor took away the card from you that means you go on a separate barrack and to, to the oven. This was every Sunday. Because how could you look good on, on that, that food? I mean, if you don't eat, you get run down. You see, everybody looked at each other how, because the ribs, if it show real, you know, if the ribs show real through, he didn't have a chance. They called you out. We were standing naked in the barracks Sunday morning, every Sunday. So, you can imagine just the fear that when the Sunday came, we knew this, this could be it, right? Because everybody looked at each other, how do I look, you

know. But just, it, it was a miracle. But who was real run down and, you know, swollen, right away they took that uh, registration card and he wasn't anymore on that, on that, in that, that barrack anymore. And this was going on every Sunday and every week was missing, missing, missing people and they kept bringing from other cities, from other countries, you know, from French, from Belgium, from Holland, from all over. Everyday was transport pouring in.

**Did you talk to the new prisoners?**

Yeah.

**Did you tell them what was going on in the camp?**

Sure.

**What was the...**

The atmosphere?

**Atmosphere in the camp, in the barracks.**

The atmosphere, see... If a person is hungry, you, you lose, you lose uh, conversation. You... What are you going to talk about it? Your mind, your stomach grinds day and night. You're hungry. You, you think about the, the family, you know. You, you, you complete... You're not a person, you're an animal. You run, you run to the kitchen. How many times I was by the garbage and I took out... The kitchen, from the kitchen they throw out those bones from horses. Most was horses. They killed the horses or sick horses, whatever they got a horse and they brought 'em to the camp to cook that soup, with that horsemeat. And a lot of times was no meat at all. It was just cooked from leaves, whatever they could get. And the peel... I never ate a potato, a whole potato. It was always

the peel from the potato they cooked in the camps. And the potatoes, the Germans, you know, it went for the Germans. So actually, the morale was so low that nobody had on his mind a joke or to talk about anything, you know. If you constant hungry you always look, you know, how to organize an extra soup, an extra piece of bread. I risked my life...

**By organizing, you mean...**

Organized, that means

**Steal.**

Yeah. That, this was the word...

**Yeah.**

in the camp, organization. That means stealing. And uh, I risked my life because I worked in the factory in ????. I had, I could, I worked with paint, let's put it that way. And in the barracks was wooden bunk beds, three wooden bunk beds. And they're made from boards. And they were painted. But during the years, you know, when you step on them you go up and down they get this... And it depends who takes care of that barrack. That particular, when I was there, that guy, he was a, he had a, a green point, that means he killed somebody. But still he liked uh, clean.

**The Blockälteste? Is this the Blockälteste?**

The Blockälteste, yeah. So, he told me, he says, he saw me everyday, I mean, he, he knew everybody by the name. He says, "If you can bring home paint, you, I'll, I'll leave you in the, in the barrack and you stay—they had, they could do everything—you stay and paint every bunk bed, but you got to bring first a lot of

paint and then I'll, I'll release you. I'll go out on the Appellplatz and I'll talk to that Stürmführer and, you know, he'll leave you for two weeks, or a week, you know, how long it's going to take you. You're going to stay here and work and I'll give you food and you're not going to be hungry." This is already a, a paradise, right? Now, how to get the paint? Because when you walk out, we were going in fives and they were counting, you know. Let's see, if it marched out, my, my group was two hundred and eighty painters in the morning, two hundred and eighty. A commando, mali commando, that means painting commando. And two hundred and eighty has to come back. And not to come back with, with, with bags. Just march in with anything, yeah. But I started one day, I poured in a gallon of paint what, what, you know, I used, I had... They didn't count how many paint I should use. They, they brought me in the morning, let's see, ten gallons. They put it in gallon. They know I'm not going to drink it. And uh, I used maybe four or five gallons, you know. So, I still had a few gallons left. But one day, I says, I'm going to take a chance. I'll take one gallon. Whatever it's going to happen, it's going to happen. I says, I'm hungry anyway. I got to take that chance. And I marched in, and, you know, your heart, you know you're not supposed to bring in nothing. And I'm holding that gallon and the minute I, you know, got through that uh, already that, that gate inside. Inside you already lose, you know. You can't run, you can't do anything, that's all. So, I went to the barracks and I talked to the Blockälteste. I says, "That's the first gallon." He said, "Okay, try everyday a gallon." He says, "In two weeks you're going to have ten, more than ten gallon of paint. And the minute we got ten gallon of paint..." And that's what I did.



Everyday I brought home a gallon. And then he left me there. He uh, went out to the stürm... uh, in the morning and he says, I uh, need him, he's going to paint, you know, the barracks. What he cares, you know. So, instead of two eighty it went out two seventy-nine. And uh, I were, at least two weeks I was not hungry. Because they went in the kitchens and they got extra bread. If somebody died—listen—if we were in, in the barracks, let's say two hundred and eighty people. He... Every week was missing people. Every week was missing. But he still collect in the kitchen for the two hundred and eighty. Sometimes he had already in the barracks two hundred and fifty. Still two hundred and eighty bread, but he didn't give us. He had his already organization what to do with it. He changed it for whiskey, for other things, you know. But that's what... Everything for bread. Everything. Bread was like gold. I... A lot of times I had, you know, two weeks, every two weeks we got a shirt. We were lucky. It was just, it was a clean shirt, but there was patches and... But if he knew you, that Blockälteste, he gave you a, a better shirt because he knew what, what you're doing with that shirt. See, if I got a good shirt, no patches, a decent shirt, even washed but in good shape yet, in the factory was Germans uh, civilians and they didn't have in the war, you know, shirts and stuff like that. They brought me an old shirt because I have to give back the next couple weeks, you know, by the, you have to give back a shirt. It doesn't matter, tored or patched, you have to give back that, another shirt. And you get another shirt. So, for that good shirt he brought me an old schmata and, and a bread. A loaf of bread for that shirt. I went in and, and uh, it was the uh, outside. When we worked, it was like uh, a john, you know, which you go...

**Yeah.**

outhouse they call it. I went in there and this you got to be careful because the SS were watching, you know. But in the bathroom they let you go. You had to run in and take off that shirt, you know. And you can imagine, they put out and take the uh, the new shirt and hide it underneath and go out, you know, and talk to that German, he give you the bread. Now when you got the bread, where you going to put it? You work, he's watching, you know. So, you got to be in that john and break the bread of pieces, in, in, in, in the pockets. You know, put it in... Whatever you can. You can't carry a loaf of bread because you would be punished because, see, they would force you, who gave you this bread, you know. And that time just for exchanging you could be shot. This was the law. No, with nobody, no civilians, no deals and no nothing. Nobody should help you. You work, go to the camp and go back to work. But no interfering with civilians whatsoever. And this was, we were there 'til they started to bomb. And then it was no good. From then on they were bombing. See, all the uh, barracks, all in the kitchen from that, the camp was built, the kitchen was going on, on steam heat, steam. Cooking, everything. But when they bomb the camps, they knocked out the uh, the, the pipes, you know. It was cold. No food whatsoever. But at least, you know, we thought maybe. So, whatever's going to happen. If they bomb, I wish they bomb every second, so it's going to be an end, you know, to the war. Never. We still, we had a chance to evacuate in 1944 in uh, January that camp, Auschwitz was complete evacuated.

**Forty-five.**

In 1945. No, in forty... January '44. January '44.

**Monowitz, you mean, was...**

Yeah. In '44 I still was liberated in April '45. Oh, you're right. Uh, January we were evacuated in 1945. And I was liberated in the 24th of April in 1945.

**Where were you...**

So, that means... From Auschwitz to Oranienberg..

**How did you get there?**

By, everything by trains.

**By trains.**

Again, this was another holocaust. Because it was wintertime, we were not dressed. Just in that striped jacket. They took us on tra... on open cattle trains. In that time, they were beating and hitting and, and we got on... It was complete open. And I remember like now and we were traveling about two days. Open cattle. It was snowing and we were just from that snow, we licked, you know. Because here everything started to dry out again. But it was wintertime we could hold it out better than, you know, summertime, you fell. In the wintertime when it's packed it keeps you warm. And we came to Oranienberg and from Oranienberg we worked there in a factory again, and in nineteen... uh, in April, this was twelve days in April, the twelfth of April we started to march. We left that Oranien boot camp and we marched through forests during the day. And at night we slept in the forest. But in daytime we kept going and going and going. We supposed to go to a certain destination. It was already, everything was uh, prepared. When they, when they caught that ??? with that uh, map, he had all the

papers, where he's going to take us. And over there we're all supposed to, it was prepared graves. We saw it after, after we were liberated, we saw dugged up graves and we supposed to go to those graves and we supposed to get shot. And don't, everybody, no witnesses supposed to be alive because they felt the pressure already that they losing the war. So, they started to eliminate everybody. And just happened, if it's meant it to live, uh... Two days if it would take we could reach that destination. But two days before we reached it they had to uh, run away. They had an order. We didn't know, but the Germans they told us all of a sudden that we were marching, we hear a, a whistle, you know. And everybody from, from the uh, the guards started to go forwards. And we are marching. We didn't know what happened. We knew that they called them, you know, the SS. But we don't know what happened. All of a sudden, one SS comes back. He says uh, in German, that we going to eat now and uh, everybody sit down in that forest. And if anybody stands up and runs away, the whole group is going to be killed. So we sat down by the trees. And all of a sudden, we don't see nobody. We see, we sit, you know, we didn't have a watch but accordingly we see it's getting already uh, dark. Nobody comes back. All of a sudden, we see Germans coming towards us with every...no belts, no hats, you know, everything off. And they said uh, what are you sitting here. He says, you go to the villagers uh, to the farmers, they'll give you food and clothes and everything. You are already liber... free.

### **This was Wehrmacht?**

Wehrmacht. The SS were still running around in the villages. Whoever reached a home they took 'em out. A friend of mine, he lives in New York, he got shot.

Fifty people they took out from that, that village outside in a field, and, and shot 'em. See, that friend of mine he was shot in the arm and they saw he's, you know, laying on top of all the dead and bleeding and he didn't say nothing, so they left. And when they left, he started to yawn and yell and scream and, and a farmer came and picked him up. And he took him about six kilometers from that little village to a hospital. And when he took him to the hospital, it was too late. A gangrene and they took off his whole arm. But still he was lucky. He's alive today with that, with one arm. And he was between those ??? Now when we started to walk, we saw the first farmhouse. We knocked on the uh, on that window and we didn't hear no response. We knocked again. A woman came and put away the curtains, looks out. You know, we were not shaved, twelve days marching. In April was rain and we were complete soaked through and through. Even that, that little jacket, you know, we had, that uh, striped with the pants, through and through wet. And didn't, you know, was scared. And they looked at us... Was no man, woman. A few minutes late she came to the door with a... You know, the farmers they bake their own bread, that big bread, big loaf, round, and a pitcher of milk. And she opened slowly the door and give us, you know. Says we don't want, we not... we can't eat. We want to go in and lay down, you know. Lay down and dry out. We, we not hungry, you know. We just want to lay down and, and dry out. She says there's still the SS troopen running around and taking out people. She says, the only thing I can do for you. They were just here maybe ten minutes ago. Go up on, in, in the, and go in the barn and there's a ladder. You go up there, there's hay. And you hide underneath the hay 'til I'll call you down. And

that's exactly what she did. We went up there and, and we were underneath that hay hiding on the end, by the wall. And then we... At night, SS came in and we hear the voice—you know, they, they talk loud—and they go up on the ladder and with, I, with bayonets they were in the hay. But thank God, if they would go up on the hay... But they were standing on the ladder and just we heard that, that, you know, they were looking if somebody didn't hide. And they went back down. And the next morning the woman yells we should come down. She says, there's Americano, you know, Americans are here, tanks. You can imagine. When we came down and walked to the street we see the white stars on the green... First we didn't know what kind soldiers, you know, 'til we got close. And then, you know, every nationality. I knew that in America it's all kind of uh, nationalities. Polish, you know, I, I speak Polish. So I figure, somebody's got to be, you know. Nothing. I couldn't speak a word of English. I says, Polish, Polish, Polish. Oh Stan! Right away they called, you know, American boys. And they could a little bit, a few words, I could communicate, you know. Every American uh, Polish kid speaks a few words, you know, from the parents. It was a sergeant. He says, listen, we just the occupation. The only thing, he says, I'll go in to that farmer and I'll tell him to give you clothes and to, and I'll tell him what to feed you. He says, you can't—this was the third army, the medics—uh, you can't eat fat. He, he, he tells me, you know, he says, otherwise you're going to die. The only thing you could eat is toast and lean soups. No fat. The first two weeks, tea. Little by little fill the stomach, he says. Because when you start right away, the fat food, you can't survive. You get diarrhea and die. So, that's what we did. Maybe six, seven

boys we were there by that farmer. And he told the farmer what to do and everyday we had toast and tea and pigeons. See pigeons, every farmer got thousands of pigeons there. Each farm has got 'em. So, everyday the woman caught a few pigeons and she cooked the pigeons for us. Pigeon soup is like water. No fat whatsoever. A pigeon is not fat. You never heard it. A pigeon is white meat like, taste a little bit like chicken. But when you cook that in, in, in water, there's no fat, just clear soup with no fat in it. And this we ate 'til we got through half of that uh, pigeons, you know. After a month we started to feel a little bit, you know. I weighed eighty-seven pounds when I was liberated, eighty-seven. I couldn't even see good. The vision, my vision was so bleary, and I was young. But from not eating. Every time you get uh, if you're hungry—God forbid you should know about it—if a person is hungry it, it gets bleary a lot of times before your eyes, you know. You don't, you weak, and you're bleary. And day to day you get weaker and weaker and the vision get weaker, you know. And we really recuperated there in that farm. And then I went. I says, I don't want to stay on the farm, it's already three months, you know. So, I told that woman... It was no man. And she took me with a horse and wagon to a city.

**Do you remember her name?**

No.

**It was a German woman.**

A German woman. She to... I says, I want to go in the city. Listen. They had to do the least, what they could do for us is keep us and feed us. That's the least what they could have done. You know what I'm talking about? Because they were

forced by the United States government to food and clothes and a place where to stay. They should supply at least, for a time being, 'til everybody gets registered wherever he wants to go, to the United States, to Canada. And I went in the city and I saw a guard outside, an American soldier. And again, I went, I said, stop here. And I went and I talked to the guy. I says, Polish, I think. You know, still. I says, in Polish. Oh yeah, Polish. Okay, okay, okay, he says. He went and opened the door and he called a guy. This was a, a officers' casino, where the u h, officers uh, American officers, captains, majors, the high ranks, ate, what do you call? A mess hall. And I talked to him and uh, I says, I don't want to go back to the village, I want to work here for Americans, you know, to pay back what they did for me, you know, I want to work, free. He says, okay. He run in and all of a sudden, he comes out with a Chinese American, Chinese descent. He was the chief chef in the kitchen there and he talked to him and the Chinese right away took me. He says, come on, got me. You see, what I ate yesterday I don't remember, but those things I remember. You know, this is laying in your mind because this is happy days. And he gave me an American uniform. And he put up on a little uh, club Poland here, you know, Poland...

### **On the arm?**

On the arm. Because it was a lot of incidents, they went through a lot from Germans. Uh, they were in American uniforms and a lot of GIs—I don't know if the United States uh, if the people knew about it—a lot of GIs was killed uh, after the war. They were changing clothes and they, and they uh, most woman. They went, you know, they took uh, girls, the girls took them in the forest and, and they



got stabbed, killed in the forest. Took away the passport, took away the uniforms. And that's why a gang, the Nazi gang started in, in Germany, again after the war 'til the United States, the CIC stepped in and started to investigate and I think they eliminate it, you know, but that time being. And I started to work for the American troops. And I worked there about a year and a half.

**Now what city were you in?**

Town. This was by ??? Right near the Cze... uh, about nineteen kilometers of the uh, from the Czechoslovakian border. This is Bavaria. Right by the end Bavaria where uh, Czechoslovakia uh, meets with Bavaria. Schwarzwald maybe you heard about it, Black Forest.

**Black Forest.**

You know now German words.

**That's what I do.**

You got a Polish uh, name too, so your parents came from Poland, or no? Or from Russia?

**My grandparents were from Kiev.**

Kiev.

**Which is Poland, but then was Russia.**

Yeah. And uh, and then, after I, I got out from there, was already, you know, a lot of Jewish people in the city. Everybody was no more in villages. It started a Jewish community. And, uh...

**You were about what, twenty-five years old now?**

Yeah. Funny. I was uh, seventeen. In five years I was, uh...

**Twenty-three years old.**

twenty-three years old and I was liberated, exactly. And then was, you know, a Jewish community. We belonged to the UNRRA. You know what UNRRA is?

**Relief.**

United...

**Nation.**

United Nations Re... Relief Organization, okay.

[interruption in interview]

And, uh...

**You were saying that everything was coming from the JOINT distribution.**

Everything, we were, you know, but... And, and that time they were already organizing a Jewish community, Jewish police. Uh, everything shouldn't be... we shouldn't be bothered by Germans whatsoever, see. We went down in the uh, military government and we took all from them papers that... No Germans, we don't want no German should have any authority over us. That's why we had our own Jewish community. They gave us uh, two buildings—the Germans—like it used to be hotels there. And all, everybody moved in, in that, in those buildings and we had our own kitchen. We uh, Friday night we all ate together and uh, it was more like haimish, you know. We started to get closer again to organize a family life.

**Had you found out about your brother yet?**

Yeah.

**You knew your brother was alive.**

I didn't know... This another story.

**All right.**

This is a big story already, because my brother, when we were separated in Auschwitz, they took him, you know, when the trains half, they cut it off on the way and like it was hundred uh, cattle trains, fifty went in a different area and fifty went to another camp. I came to that camp and I came out from that cattle car. We, we supposed to be in, in barracks, there was no barracks. It was holes what they used the hangars from the aeroplane hangars, and we slept on the cement. But this is besides the point. But I went... was three hangars. I went from hangar... Every hangar was a few thousand people and I looked, no brother. And then I found out that on the way they cut off half went in another camp, you know. So, I figure maybe, you know, he, he's still alive but he's in another camp. But I didn't see him 'til after the war. One, he was with another brother. We were three brothers. The youngest brother—I don't know how, he was built husky—he looked fourteen, fifteen but he was only twelve. And they were together. You heard about that ship when they were liberated in uh, Bergen-Belsen. In Hanover the boat got uh, burned with ten thousand uh, refugees. I forgot the name of that ship. See, they supposed to be... He was liberated on the English zone. See was four zones in, in, in, in, in, in Germany. The English, French, American and Russia. He was liberated on the English zone in Bergen-Belsen. So, he was there, but that uh, in Hanover was a, a port, you know, with all the ships. And they were counting to five to go to those ships thousands supposed to go on that ship. They supposed to, I don't know, drown 'em, eliminate 'em, or to different camps,

nobody knows 'til today. And my brother was with the other brother and they were counting fives in the line and he was standing as a sixth. So, they grabbed him and they kicked him—this brother what he's alive—and sent him all the way to the end. And this brother, the youngest, he was going on that ship and then a half an hour later, English planes... my brother saw it, with that ship is burning. They were bombing. They thought this is uh, Germans, you know. They didn't know this is a refugee camp. They came... Later they came down, the pilots and crying. But it was too late already. The damage was done. All the Germans managed, when they were bombing, they were under the boats, little boats, whatever they could, they run away. And this ship they came down low, was no flag, nothing. And they bombed it, and the whole ship blowed up and my youngest brother was in that, in that, that ship. So, you can imagine how this brother... This brother, him you couldn't interview. No way. I can't even talk with him. A lot of times, you know, we get together in the holidays I can't talk. He doesn't want to... He starts to cry and he get hysterical. He can't talk about the war at all. Sometimes I want to ask him, you know, if he knew this guy and this guy. He says, he says, "Sy, don't, don't mention. I don't want to, I don't want to know." He can't talk about it. Because he saw it, how my, the, the other brother got uh, killed. It was two hours. Two hours before they were liberated. And on the way, this brother... See, the other brother got all of a sudden, he was weak, he couldn't even walk. And he talked him out, he says, you'll see. It's not going to take long. We... See what they bombing and they machine guns and, you know, and airplanes. He said, it's going to be the end, so keep up. So, he hold him. He

hold him under the arm and almost dragged him, you know. And he pulled him there. And uh, if it's not, wasn't ??? it looks like, you know. And he went in, in that ship and this brother got liberated two hours later from the English troops. So, the Eng... English did it, but it's not English fault.

**It's not your brother's fault either.**

No, so that's...

**Did you ever think uh, think about going back home?**

No. To go home, I knew I don't have nobody there. Secondly, I know uh, my boyfriends, they went back to Poland after the war. Right after the war, if they saw a Jew in a train... In Kielce, was a big pogrom after the war from the Polacks. See, the Polish people, they can spot a Jew. They can tell because they were raised in, with that inside anti-Semitism, with the hatred. And they throw out... Anytime they saw a Jew on a train they opened the window while the train was going and thrown him out. A lot of Jewish people liberated from the camps got killed after when they came back to Poland. I got two boyfriends. One boyfriend they got him in, the others, the other disappeared right away into the train and he went back to Germany. When he came back he told me. See, he had a big uh, they had a big furniture store before the war. And the business was going good, so they put up a big building. In that building upstairs, oh, about three, four floors was rented, like an income, apartments. And down... downstairs over the old, the whole building they made a big store furniture. So, the building was worth a lot of money, a brick building. I was a kid that time, you know, when they were building it. And uh, when he came back and they saw him, right away they

knew he's going... That time Russia was controlling. They, they figure he'll go to the Russian government and they'll... He's going to have to uh, give up that building, you know, that Polack. They got him in and they chopped off his head. That's what the other boyfriend told me. They got him in and chopped off, and took him in a place and chopped off his head. He never... Dead. And he came back, he says, told everybody, don't even go. To hell with the houses because they, they didn't expect anybody to come back. And all of a sudden they see 'em back and they going to have to give up the property. This, this was theirs. When the Jews moved out, you know, when they uh, when the Germans left Poland, all the Polish what they knew whose Jewish property they got in. And that's all. Russia didn't chase them out. Whoever lives there, you know, it's theirs. But when somebody comes back and he's alive and he reports and he goes to the city hall and says this house was my father's, you know, I came back to get it back, the Russians would try, you know, to do something. At least to go in with him and try to uh, pay him or, you know, something. This was after the war. So nobody, everybody lost appetite. That's why nobody went back to Poland. Just a few uh, what they are in Poland now, this is not from the concentration camp, believe me. This is only people what they were uh, liberated uh, they were Polish Jews, but they were living during the war in Russia. They came back during assimilation, you know. Maybe they ma... they married Polish girls, something like that, you know. This is the only reason. Because anybody has a little sense... I would never live in Poland because I was raised there and I know what I went through as a kid. So, why would I go after a war what I went through, you know. I wouldn't settle

in Poland at all. Even they would give me the biggest houses and the biggest stores, no way. Because I know I wasn't free. I wasn't free 'til I came to the United States in 1950. That's the first time I felt a free person between so many nationalities.

**Before I ask you about the United States, can, can I ask a few questions about what we covered already. I notice you have a number on your arm.**

Yeah.

**You didn't tell me how you got that. When did they tattoo...**

This is happened, this is happened the, the number they gave me in Auschwitz after I was shipped from Buna to Monowitz, to Auschwitz. In that time, that man... See, we didn't know, but the number meant that to live.

**You were going to be a worker.**

Who had a number was picked to work. But that time we didn't know what the number is for. All of a sudden, you know, was a table outside and you had to stay, give your arm and they, you know, this number doesn't, doesn't come out except the skin...

**It's a tattoo.**

This was with ink, ink needle. Was specialist, somebody knew uh, how to, that, do that type of work. But you can see how clear, you know, 18-837, Auschwitz.

**What was going through your head when that was happening? Do you remember?**

We didn't care. It didn't go... you know. I didn't even think, I figure, you know, that something... Because the minute I was registered and they asked me what, what I can do, what kind work I can do. I says, modeling. And right away they

asked me so many questions, what do you do, because in Europe painting is not like in this country, see. Here, you open up a gallon of paint and a brush and you paint. And in Europe you have to mix your own colors. And you start out from scratch. You buy chalk, comes like flour, you know. And you buy uh, farben, that means the uh, cone, the colors, dry, dry colors.

**Dyes.**

And oil and how much, the amount, you learn already from experience. And everything is mixed. You put it everything in a pail, whatever the amount, rooms you have to do, you know. And you mix your own paint. And when you pass... I didn't know that time, but I answered all the questions, you know. He told me, what do you when you come in, in a room painting. So, I told him. I wash the walls with soap, powder soap, you know, with a sponge. You wash off everything and the next day you come back and you mix, start mixing, whatever the people pick, you know, what color. So, I passed the exam. And that leaded me right away that I'm going to work painting. I had a suspicion, but still the fear inside. I still had the fear of Auschwitz, you know.

**Were there any, in your barracks, were there any musulman, any of the, any that you said were, were finished, you could tell they were finished?**

A, a lot of them.

**Were there suicides?**

No.

**Not on the fences, did anyone ever...?**



No, no. Uh, a few guys during the time I was in, in uh, in Bu...in Monowitz, a few guys I heard that they cut 'em, they run away. They run away. I don't know how. Certain, had jobs, uh, they took 'em like the ??? The ??? had the ai... anti-air... uh, air uh, anti-airgun.

### **Anti-aircrafts?**

Anti-aircrafts. They had, they picked a lot of times from our camp people in the morning, you know, on trucks and took 'em to uh, uh, Krakow. Whatever. A few guys run away. And they caught 'em. And when they caught 'em they brought 'em back to our camp. And when we marched in, we had an order not to go in the barracks. We had to go on the Appellplatz first. And this got already scared. The minute that any congregated, you know, we knew they're going to pick or do something. So everybody said, oh, who knows what's going to happen.

Appellplatz? You know, we just came back from work, what happened? The minute we came on an Appellplatz we saw already uh, the uh, what do you, the hanging, the...

### **Gallows, yeah.**

Then we knew right away that they going to show. And right away they, on the microphones they were announcing that uh, the reason the, all the workers got to go through the gallow and see because a few guys, you know, run away and then we caught 'em and that's the reason, you know, we going to hang 'em. And that's exactly what happened. So, everybody had to go through marching and look the way, on the... This was the law, the order. We have to pass by and look at the

gallow and... That, that night was hunged about four, four guys. And they caught 'em.

**Did anyone talk about it?**

Who?

**Anyone in the barracks. No?**

They, we talked about it. We said that, you see what happen i... i... if you run away. Where's to run? There is no way. We are shaved. No Germans would take you in. The only chance, if you could reach a uh, deep forest and get away with it and get into the uh, Polish underground, this... But later on I, I, you know, I found out that the Polish underground didn't act good uh, if somebody came already they were talking against the Jews and, and you were uh, humiliated, and especially with girls. One guy from my city, he lives in Toronto now—Adrian Vicek is his name—he was liberated and he run away from Starowicea [Starowice]. He was in the, in the Jewish police. So, he talked to that guard during the day. Probably gave him money too, you know, he had money. Because those police what they worked uh, all the transports came uh, in, in... They, they, they were in the uh, uh, in the places what they got, let's see, undressed, and by that clothing some of 'em had a piece of gold, some of them had a few dollar, so then, you know. And the police had the authority to go in, in that uh, they called it the ??? Uh, uh, warehouses, see. And they knew where to look for it. So, he had a few dollar probably and he gave the guard and the guard gave him a gun. A gun. He run away with a gun. I didn't know then, but I talked to him already, you know, a few times I was in Canada. We grew up together. And uh, I, I knew that morning

be... he run away the morning that we're supposed to be evacuated from that camp, from Starowicea [Starowice] to go to Auschwitz. A few hours before he run, run away. I remember like now, he took off that, uh... He was, he was in uniform but he was going, a poli... uh, a policeman's hat, you know. He took off the hat, he throw it by the gate, you know, and he jumped the gate and jumped the other side and the forest wasn't too far. But the guard knew him, you know, the guard was paid off. He let him go and, and since then we didn't hear anything about him. But after the war in Germany I found out that he was all the time... He reached... He was a tall guy. Looked... In the underground they didn't know. He had a Polish name. Vicek is a, a, ??? is uh, not a German shepherd but... What do you call those animals? They, they look like German shepherds.

**Dog, dog?**

A dog, yeah.

**Not a wolf.**

A wolf, exactly. So, he didn't look Jewish at all. He was blonde, you know, he didn't look a Jew. So, when he saw a lot of people came to that forest and, and he got 'em connected, but they were always, they didn't know, the main gang of the uh, uh, underground, the leader didn't know that Adrian, that—Avraham was his name, Abe, you know, Avraham—and uh, they didn't know he's Jewish at all. So, he played he's a Polack, you know. Spoke perfect Polish. And he, he told me, he says, it was terrible, the way they were talking against Jews and, he says, me as a Jew and, and, and listen and not to fight back because I couldn't otherwise I

would be killed. He says, I want to save my life too. They took the Jewish girls and they almost like, they raped them.

**The partisans?**

The partisans. No? And afterwards, he says, after they raped them they were talking about 'em, you know, bad, on top of it. So, he was very bitter after the war. Terrible. So he, after he uh, we got out, you know, from Poland he came to Germany. And from Germany he emigrated, he had an uncle in uh, in Canada. Got contact with him and he took him down.

**When you were in the camp, in Monowitz or Buna um, were you punished ever for anything?**

No. I can't, I can't say, uh... Over there punishment, there's no punishment, or they uh, kill you, you know, when you commit something to be real punished. It wasn't just to give you a slap and forget about it. If you commit something, if they catch you with something, you know, then you're complete eliminated. But the only experience I had is in uh, in Lublin, you know, with that...

**With the electric shock.**

with that, with the, the electric shock.

**Let me, do you remember...**

Otherwise it's beating, you know, kicking, uh...

**This happened to you?**

This, yeah, it's happened to me uh, a lot of times, you know. On, on, the jo... only on the jobs. One time, this was in Starowicea [Starowice] yet, you know. One uh, Polish person, he lived in, in our street. It just happened he was uh, uh... In the

factory he had a job as a, they called it Meister, but engineer, by the ovens, you know, by the foundries. So, a lot of times in the morning, you know, he couldn't talk to me but he knew me and I knew him. And when he was standing, he came in the morning, he went to the oven, by the ovens was warm, he was standing, it wasn't time yet for him to start, let's see. So, he was standing and uh, you know, warm himself. And I knew already, anytime he was by that oven, he had a, a, a sandwich, piece of bread. And he was standing, you know, and I went behind, you know, by the oven and looked for something and I took it from him. And no talk because you don't know who was a German civilian, you know. Volksdeutsche, you know, it was a lot of Germans that had swastikas. And, and a lot of exper... bad experience I had when I worked in that foundry. At night we had a uh, he must have been half-German, but he spoke to us everything in Polish. But, but he was like a, a foreman. He took us out. We worked night shifts. He took us out and we had to load big bars of steel and bring 'em in that, in the factory and cut 'em in big pieces. This was shells, hundred and fifty uh, millimeter shells, anti- uh, anti-aircraft shells, big. We had to, from a big, with a crane. Uh, the crane was going on uh, uh, what do you call? When, when, when it comes to uh, close to the iron, it catches, uh... Magnet. A heavy magnet. You can imagine a magnet picked up a long bar like this beam, exactly. Those beams were piled up outside in the wintertime, cold. We had to from piles, and this was heavy that nobody, we had to with iron, sticks to roll 'em down on two-by-fours on a little wagon and the wagon was on, on tracks. And with the tracks we had to push it in in the factory inside, unload 'em straight by the uh, foundry. And by that foundry was a

machine. The machine was going, like a press, a press machine. We had to, it was like a table with rollers and we had to pick up those bars and put 'em on that table and with iron stick little by little to push it underneath. And we had to, that Mei... that, that, that foreman was marking with crayon and we had to exactly cut 'em. And if you had a... if you made a little mistake and cut it a little crooked, this was the end. This was sabotage they took you for. So, we were not used...

**To be killed, you mean?**

Killed. There was no way. So, I was standing by that, by that press in the whole mine, you know, was controlling. And the other guys just... If, if I would make, you know, any little mistake, cut a little crooked. This was bars, you know, bars like gold that time. They were anxious to want more because they were supposed to start with England a war, you know, start with Russia the war. They needed material. They had labor, but no material. And we worked by that oven and this... We were kicked outside. We were, we were working with so much fear that it's unbelievable. He was a maniac; this guy was a maniac, just for little nothing he could kick you in, in the groin. He kicked guys that fell down, and they, they fainted. I've never seen an animal. And we couldn't do nothing about it because, what are you going to do? There was all the Ukrainian guards watching and... He did, he was so mean, he was so pale. I'll never forget that, that face; a short guy about...

**Was he Polish? Is he Polish?**

Polish.

**Civilian?**

He must... Civilian clothes. He had the authority on Jews.

**Do you remember any... anybody in the Buna plants that any of the names of people who were supervisors? Do you remember someone named Ambrose, Otto Ambrose or Schlitzer, anyone named Schlitzer? Do you remember any of the, any of the German overseers, the civilian engineers?**

We were so... Who cared about... That time we, I knew the name, you know.

**Faces you remember.**

Yeah, I... One guy, a Polish guy, his name was Otto, a blonde, Polish fellow. He wasn't too bad. He didn't beat us, he was yelling. He, he pretended, you know, for the uh, for the authority, for the Germans that he is tough. But he wasn't. He wasn't that bad; a Polish guy. He, he was red, a redhead uh, his first name was Otto. Otto.

**Was there any disease in the camps?**

Yeah.

**Any illness?**

I went through, in Starowicea [Starowice], I had typhoid. The whole camp. Listen, that time a lot of people died. It was no way to survive under those conditions. I had about 104, that's what they told me, 104, 105 fever. I didn't talk normal in that, you know.

**You were delirious, or... ?**

In, in that night...

[interruption in interview]

So, what were we talking about?

**The fever.**

Yeah. That night I was already a few days. But one... The Sturmbann...  
bannführer, the, the, they call it the uh, Lagerführer from that particular camp.  
He... Once in two weeks he came, but when he came, he was built up with that  
uh, beast in him. He had to kill. He had to shoot somebody. So, he knew that that  
camp has typhoids. He knew. That's why he came, he wants shoot anybody in the  
barracks. So, the Jewish police had a report that he's coming. When he came, they  
took us all out, outside with that fever and we were standing outside and he run in  
in every barrack. And who couldn't get out, he... This was his pleasure, to shoot  
'em on the uh, on the bed, on the bunk bed.

**The Jewish police were, were well... well liked? They helped?**

The Jewish police, very few, very few worked with the Germans, very few.  
Because this, they, they had a lot of uh, responsibility. They gave 'em all the  
authority and they picked up every report, everything from the Jewish police.  
They had to keep it up, you know. But nobody, they didn't just uh, kick or beat  
somebody uh, for nothing. It has to be something. He answered back or he... you  
know, for a reason. But they did their job.

**So, they weren't hated.**

No, no, no. Certain police uh, they, they were in uniform, they acted that they are  
already, they're going to live through, you know. But they killed a lot of Jewish  
police, but on the end, the Germans. Even they worked with the Germans  
together. But when the Germans saw they don't need anymore, the Jewish police,  
and when they'll, all the Jews are sent away to the camps, they killed the Jewish



police. There shouldn't be no witnesses, you know. This was the whole thing about no survivors should be left to tell this story. This was Hitler idea. But he didn't succeed. He almost did, you know, he did. Six million.

**Let me ask you just a few more questions.**

Yeah.

**Why, after all this time—maybe you, you must have thought about it—why do you think that, that you did survive?**

Why. First it takes a lot of willpower to live too. This is, this is the major thing. The willpower for survival. If you talk to yourself and you say I got to survive. I'm not going to lay down and, and die, you know. Whatever it's going to happen, I got to fight through. And the end is coming, you know. That's... But it took five years. But most of 'em didn't think that way. Most of 'em says, I can't live under those conditions and go on, you know. It's better to die. One time, and that's it. But not everyday to go through pain.

**You thought this way from minute to minute, do you think?**

Yeah. All the time, by any... See, at work and, and, and going home, I mean, back to the barracks, my mind was that it's got to end. It can't go on. Somebody in the world, you know, is still wa... going to wake up, you know, because it can't be that one person like Hitler, that one nation's going to destroy, you know, people just like that and nobody is going to mix in. But the minute we saw bombings, the raids, we knew that still the world is... Something is going to happen. And that what kept me uh, to be, you know, alive today.

**You kept saying it was a miracle that you...**

Yeah. Everyday was a miracle, everyday. It was a miracle how, and even today, I don't know how I survived and came out after five years under those conditions.

Because I can't tell you on the tape everything, you know. It's impossible otherwise I would, I would have to stay a, maybe a whole year from the beginning. I just picked up, you know, from the beginning 'til now.

**Have you ever talked to anybody about it at all?**

Not... We talk, but not as, you know, I talk to you now.

**Your family, do they know the stories that you...**

My kids? Sure.

**You've talked to them about it?**

They know everything, where I was and what I went through. If, if I can, you know... Kids, they got to know. I got three boys, especially, you know. They got to know and they know.

**That, just... why I want to sort of finish the story.**

Yeah.

**You, you were... It was 1946; you were still with the Chinese cook...**

Yeah.

**with the...**

Yeah.

**Third Army. What happened then after that?**

Then uh, in nineteen uh, '47 when I told you that they formed a Jewish community, you know. So, I was a chief of the uh, we had our own commi... uh, Jewish community and our own police. I was chief of the police

**Hm.**

'Til I came to this country.

**What made you decide to come to the United States?**

I... Oh, the United States, I thought about the uh, police. I was, I was voted from the uh, all the Jewish people, they voted me. And, you know, it was votes and...

To me, to come to the United States, I could go to Canada too. But when I worked for the American troops, that's what made me, you know. I saw, I talked to the people, and to the soldiers, you know. And, and I, I had that desire, you know, to go to the United States.

**Your brother too?**

Yeah... No, my brother was in Israel and he was in the Israeli war and then uh, it was very bad for him, you know, right after the war and... And he, he went to Canada, and from Canada I brought him over here.

**How did you get together, you and your brother?**

After the, after the war?

**After the war.**

See, that's another long story.

**Okay.**

See, it's too long. I can't. But I'm going to tell you how, you know. After war was like uh, whatever was liberated, a lot of people were, I told you about four zones.

Each was in different zones, in English zone, American zones, the Russian zones, and French zone. He was in English zone. He was liberated there and he was there in a camp. Now uh, a girl was looking for her brother and I saw this girl in that

city in Bavaria. And sh... And, you know, we talked about it. And she was going... She had a permit from General Eisenhower. The permit was every GI she should get, and every military government she should get support traveling, place where to stay in each city, you know. And she, that's what she ??? She was looking for her brother in the same talk and she was looking for my brother. So, she got in touch... She found her brother in the English zone, the same place where my brother was. And, and then they talked, she told him where I am. And right away he took that time—there was no transportation—he took a train, transport train, coal. They came... He came black, you know, on top of the coal, and he came to Bavaria from the English zone. Because that time was bombed, you know, it was the regular uh, trains uh, passenger trains didn't go yet. So, and that's what I found.

**But he wanted to go to Israel.**

Actually, we both supposed to be, go. We both were registered, you know, but I was engaged... That's another long story. And then, you know, he went by himself and I uh, was still left in uh, in Germany And then he wrote a letter that it's very bad now and if I could uh, emigrate, if I got a chance to go to the United States, go. Maybe he said I can get out, and that's what exactly happened.

**You were engaged in Bavaria?**

Yeah, to ???, it's my wife. And uh, they came from Poland too, you know.

**Is your wife a survivor? Your wife's not...**

She, she wasn't in a concentration camp, but she had it worse than me. She was uh, hidden three and a half years by two uh, two Catholic nuns, her and my mother-in-law. That's...

**That's another story.**

She can't talk about it. She had it worse. Because those seven, eight years old couldn't... upstairs lived German police, on mounted police, you know, on a horse. And downstairs the two nuns went away every day to the church. And upstairs the woman, the police wife knew that nobody's downstairs. They had... they were under a table three and a half years, underneath a table. And when they had to cough, everything was ??? because until the two nuns came home in the evening, they could breathe but a whole day they couldn't. They couldn't even stand up and walk because Europe is not built like this with brick. It's, it's thin. You can hear every word somebody says downstairs or upstairs. So, she doesn't want to talk about it.

**You came to the United States in 1950. You became a citizen five years later?**

Yeah.

**You moved right to Detroit?**

First step from New York, you know, from this ship to Detroit, until now.

**Just a couple more things. And one... Um, does the experience during the war um, ever interfere during the day? Are there times when you see something that reminds you of something in one of the camps or about your family?**

Only uh, only uh, German shepherds uh, the family you're always going to miss, see. This is always is in front by any uh, gathering or by any uh, festival like the

holidays. The parents are always in my mind, missing. It's a ??? It's too young, you know. If you have the parents 'til about twenty, twenty-two, twenty-three, then you go away and come back, it's different. But if you get separated, which we were very close

[interruption in interview]

**So, at simchas and holidays, you...**

Most is simchas and holidays and, then, you know, then I miss my family.

**Uh, why German shepherds? You didn't mention.**

The German shepherds, they were always in the camps, even in, in Monowitz. When the Germans walked they always had the German shepherd. And just happened when you approached, you know, towards them and they always said to the dog, "Juden." Jew. And that dog he let 'em loose, but the dogs were trained just to knock you down. And that scary thing, I... More than a year, I, every night I was dreaming and I was complete wet. Always the German shepherds or...

**Were you knocked out?**

they'd be attacking.

**Did they attack you?**

They were knocked out. Yeah. They didn't bite but just jumped on you, knocked you down and just [makes growling noise] and this I always saw, you know, for a year and a half. Most of the night I, I, I had those terrible dreams about the German shepherds. Even today, if I see a German shepherd I don't go in in that, that house 'til they, they, you know, I go and estimate jobs and stuff like that. If I

see, I says, you got to put him in a room, you know, I can't, I can't face it, that's all.

**Do you still have nightmares?**

No. No. But it took a long time.

**Did you have nightmares before? About the camp or about what?**

About, the most is about the horror. See, everything came up in front of me, uh... The pushing, the kicking, by the trains. That, that, all the painful things, you know, stood up in front of me. And, and you woke up, and I woke up in a, in a sweat, you know, and I told the doctor too. He said, well, this, you can't, it's going to be the time, but, he says, you can't do nothing about it. That's emotional uh, you know. But you lived through and now, you know, it comes. That's what the dreams are.

**Um, you have how many children now?**

Three boys. Three sons.

**I see some baseball trophies.**

Well, they, they did everything. They did baseball and everything.

**How old are they?**

One is thirty, one is twenty-seven, and one is nineteen, he goes to Michigan. The other two finished school already and they're on their own. And uh, the youngest is in, just started this year, he's nineteen, he started Michigan State.

**Mazel tov.**

Thank you.

**Are either of the older ones married?**

No, nobody's married. This is... They said if I'll get married I'll have children, you're going to be an old zeyde. You know, this way you're still young. I says, punish me.

**You're very proud of them.**

Oh yeah, oh yeah. They're good boys and... You know, that's, you try the best to raise them to your knowledge and, and understanding and, you know, they... I can't complain. They're good-natured kids and they'll do everything for the family and that's what I wanted.

**You keep a tight-knit family too.**

Oh yeah, oh yeah.

**Is there anything else that you would like to uh, to put on the table before we stop?**

I think that's what I... That's all I have to tell you.

**All right. Thank you very much.**

You're welcome.