

*Michael Weiss Interview*

**Could you tell me your name please and where you are from?**

My name is Michael Weiss. W.E.I.S.S. I was born in Kascony. Kascony is a small town near Beregszasz.

**Tell me something about life in Kascony before the war started.**

Well, life in Kascony, til 1939 we were under the Czech Regime. Our President was Masaryk. And then when he died, it was Benes and we couldn't feel any anti-Semitic things coming down from the government. Our neighbors, the Hungarians, they were all the time anti-Semites, but the government itself, the Czech government, we couldn't feel any anti-Semitic, ah, laws coming down from them.

**Where there, how many Jews would you say were in the town?**

In Kascony there was about a hundred families. So I would say, three hundred, uh, people.

**How large was your family?**

My family, I was the only one. I am the only child from my family.

**Aunts, uncles, grandparents?**

Oh, aunts and uncles, I, you know, during the years I think all of us, we got out kind of, and we came out about thirty-four, ah, ah, family members whom I knew.

**Do you know how many survived the war?**

Ah, ah, I know of two cousins. One lives in Toronto and the other one lives in Florida now.

**Tell me something about your parents, about your home.**

Well, my parents, my home, we had a hard life. My father was working in the vineyard and I was going to the Yeshiva, to public schools, and on my vacation I was working to help out.

**You went to both Yeshiva and public schools?**

I went to both. I went in the morning to public school and then in the afternoon, first to cheder and then later I went to the Yeshiva.

**So you went to public school where you spoke what language in this school?**

Uh, well, it was, ah, I went to Hungarian school.

**And then cheder was religious school?**

Cheder was Yiddish, only Yiddish spoken, yes.

**And the Yeshiva was?**

The Yeshiva naturally, the Yeshiva was with uh, uh, black hats, most of them, payes, it was a very religious Yeshiva. Like throughout Carpatha Rus it was religious Yeshivas.

**Now, your town was in a very orthodox region?**

Very orthodox region, yes, yes, yes. We had a Rabbi. Our town was very small but even today you mention the Kociner rebbe. He was very famous. And there were many Rabbis famous, Munkacs had a very famous Rabbi. Ungvár, Uzhorod had a very famous Rabbi, and many towns, I can name one after the other.

**And what was the region like? Was it modern?**

Well, well, I would say something like here, really. I never knew how cold its outside or how hot its outside. Never knew how many inches of snow fell or what. It was winter, we went first to Shul to daven then to public school. And after lunch we to the Yeshiva. Because of wet or rain or anything that I wouldn't go today because it's raining or snowing or it's too

cold outside. That never happened.

**In your home, I assume you celebrated the Sabbath?**

Well, we looked forward for Sabbath.

**What was Friday night like?**

Friday, Friday, the day Friday you went out in that little town on the streets, you could see that Shabbos is coming. You could see it. Ah, ah, people went to the store, people, uh, they were cooking and, and, and getting ready. Ah, ah, dressed up and it was ever a holiday, looking forward for many reasons. To go Friday night to Shul, you see your friends there, and you seen everybody dressed up. It was very, very nice. You seen the Rabbi and everybody was happy. Everybody was happy. And then you went home. Now you went home, your mother was home in her white apron, the candles was lit, the rooms were nice and clean, and you could see something *magic, magic* happening about Shabbos.

**Tell me more.**

Well, then naturally Saturday morning, Saturday morning you went to Shul. And I would say 95% was in Shul every Saturday morning. And ah, ah, the payes, it was, it was something you look forward, for, for, forwards toward. And, uh it just, magic happened. The whole week nobody really worried on Shabbos, whatever it was, it was Shabbos. We ate, we sang the zemirot and in the afternoon we went to Shul again, and ah, it was, it was a magic day.

**Did the rest of your family come, other members of your family come to your house for Shabbos dinner?**

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Well, well, we had my grandfather and grandmother living in town and, uh, in later year we moved into one house because my grandmother, my Bobe was very sick. She could not see, she was blind in her eyes, and she could not see. She didn't even knew how old she is. When they asked her, she said all the time, "a hundred." And people liked her, people liked to talked to her because she was, I think, the oldest person in town and ah, and I, I, you know, I was a child then but I remember everybody when they see her, they talk to her. But she went very little on the streets, she was bedridden and ah, ah, and very, very sick. People don't, uh, doctors didn't know what's wrong with her.

**And your mother took care of her...when she was...?**

Oh yes, at home, at home really, we didn't have many uh, homes for the aged when they got old. My mother took care of her and she needed care, she needed care. And our meals wasn't that good but she did, never heard any complaints ah, that she worked a lot or whatever. And that was the rule of the thumb in Europe, to take care on the parents, grandparents and so forth.

**Tell me a little bit about what you remember about your mother.**

Well, ah...what I remember about my mother. I can tell you one thing, I miss her a lot. I still miss her a lot. It's fifty years over and there is a saying that time heals. Time heals, a tragedy happens, time heals. I can tell you today after fifty years, somehow, as the years go by, I miss her more. I miss my family more. I miss my hometown more. I miss my Rabbi more. And I am wondering now that I am a little bit more mature, how could this happen. Why did it happen! How in the world could something like this happen and I'm more, even bitter that

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how could the free countries allowed this. That something like this, this is the biggest destruction, horrible, of human beings, they plain human beings and what they did and how they did it. It's, it's, it's I just...cannot even believe it, that there are people so much, with so much hate and for one reason. There was only one reason this happened; because they were Jews, nothing else. They weren't involved in politics, they really didn't care if we under the Czech Regime, it was Czech and the Hungarians came in. It was Hungary. We didn't protest it, we didn't dare, it was Hungary. We accept that we were there and we accepted it. We couldn't to ah, overthrow a government or anything and that's, that's, that's, that's the tragic and the word tragic I don't think is strong enough. It's, it's, I don't think there was a word to describe to take a human being when my mother, in 1944, she was forty-three years old. I'm seventy-one today. She was forty-three years old. And they take her, they took her, they took her. And a friend of mine told me she seen her going in to the gas chamber. [long silence]

**When do you feel it all began, this what you're describing?**

Well, really, really, really in 1938, as the Hungarians came in. The Hungarian government started already. First, they took away the licenses from Jewish people.

**Licenses to do what?**

The licenses to operate a business. And I mean small business. Somebody had a tailor shop, a grocery store, or a dry good store, whatever, they took away the licenses. Now how should people exist on that? I mean, they took away the livelihoods. And then later on we had to wear a yellow star. So that meant that everybody knew he's Jewish, he's different, he

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has to be hated, and that's how the hatred, that's how the hatred started really up.

**Had you experienced any kind of anti-Semitism before the Hungarians came?**

Before the Hungarians came, no. The only thing sometimes I went to school and I was pulled on the payes and a little beaten up and so forth. But again, from the government, from the Czech government, we did not experience *any* anti-Semitism.

**So the turning point was 1938, you think?**

1938 it started up already and we felt it right away.

**And how did your parents react? Did they talk to you about it?**

Well, actually we weren't that well-informed. We didn't know television, we had no radio, newspapers, whatever they wrote and by the time it came to us it was four or five days later. If there was a radio, we went to listen to Hitler's speech and ah, it was discussed. But really to imagine what that will happen, we never dreamt of it. And we didn't know really what, something like that you don't, you don't dream of. You dream many things. They take away your, whatever you have. And so for so on. But to do this, what they did, nobody never dreamed of it.

**So you knew about what was going on in Germany? You heard Hitler's speeches?**

I knew Hitler's speeches. We knew Hitler's speeches. And at many times we didn't understand it really. We discuss, we discussed it. Friends got together in, in our house or in somebody else's house and they were discussing it and so forth but we didn't know, we didn't know, that all this will happen and so forth and so on.

**Was your father taken to a labor camp?**

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Yes, yes. Well, my father was called in, in 1939 already to forced labor because the Hungarian ah, ah, ah, government didn't took Jews to the army. They took them to forced labor and he was there about six months and then they let him home. Now, my father, they, he was called in again, he was twice and naturally he came with us, with me, to the ghettos.

**This is later?**

This is, this is already in '44.

**Uh...you came from a very orthodox town, was there a Zionist movement at all in the town?**

Well, I tell you, the Zionist movement, there was a Zionist movement there, but this was very low key at that time, at that time. The orthodox movement didn't believe in Zionism. The orthodox movement believed that the Meshiach will come.

**Messiah?**

We are all gonna go to Israel and then we will have Jerusalem and that was the thoughts and the teachings of the orthodox movement to us, Carpatha Rus, at least.

**What about you and your parents?**

Ah, well no, I, I, I, I did not belong to any Zionist organization. The Zionist organization was small. But I did attended a few meetings ah, my parents didn't know about it. But actively and actually the truth of the matter, an active Zionist organization was not in existence that it should flourish and it should ah, ah, ah, ah, think about building, about having a country. No, it was not uh, uh, we did have, it's called a Hakh'sharah, to get ready. And we did have that young boys came to our town and they went to work in the village and after that they did went to Palestine in order to know the agriculture a little bit because

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they knew that's what they are gonna have there. So we did have that, some of that, in our town.

**When your father was taken away what happened in your household?**

Well, well, well, well that's, that's, that's, it was a very hard life throughout, throughout. Ah, when he was taken away now the government did give, like if somebody goes into the army they give I don't know the name, you know, some money ah, but they did give some money and that's what we lived on. And then I was working ah, ah, a little bit here and there and ah, that's, that's, that's, was very, very, very hard life.

**So you became the man of the...?**

Well, in a way, yes. In a way, yes. You see, you see what, what, even I hear that in this country too, that all the Jews are bankers. And all the Jews are rich people and so forth. In Europe, and I know even in this country, no, no, hard work, we all came here. I came here to this country. No relative, nothing, it was hard work. It was very hard work.

**What kinds of things do you remember in the period between say, 1939 and 1944? Your father came back?**

Yeah, he came back, he was home and he went to work in the vineyard. They did allow days, days laborers. You could do that, but in business you cannot be. And ah, ah, naturally it started little by little. We had the Yeshiva that had to close. And again we went from day to day [pause] and it was very hard. That's the only thing that really ah, and then ah, in 1942, my grandfather died home. And that was a very big shock for the family again and ah one after the other and one after the other and people really wondered what the next day will



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bring with all this new laws coming out from the Hungarian government and ah, ah, that's the only thing I can say really it was a very, very hard life. I went many times to sleep, I wouldn't mind to have another piece of bread. It was that hard. And then they started to give ah, ah, the bread on coupons. You could buy, I forgot ah, I think two kilograms a week or something of that nature ah, and meat, meat went on coupons, sugar went on coupons. And ah, first you had to...you needed the money and then you had the money and you just can buy that much, so ah, for the Jews it was a very, very hard life.

**Had you and your family heard about Horthy and Szálasi?**

Oh yes, yes, but Szálasi, now he was, he was another Hitler. Szálasi was another Hitler. Ah, ah, ah, ah, he had, he had ah, like, like SS Jugend in Hungary. And they were spread all over, ah, all our small towns had them. And Jews were afraid to go on the streets. Ah, from this Szálasi Jugend.

**Was it that Arrow Cross Party?**

Arrow Cross yeah, yeah.

**Were there neighbors of yours who were in...this?**

Well, well, neighbors of ours, there was, I know whom I, with whom I went to school. Ah, and ah, they were, they were, and then the neighbors, especially the day when they gathered us to the schools, all these neighbors who we thought they are friends, they were out and they had a holiday. They were ah, ah, laughing on the streets and they were saying, I was between them there, "I'm gonna move into that Jew's home tomorrow" and others said, "I move into that." They were ready, they were happy, they were willing to get rid of the

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Jewish people because by us and I could say that, knowingly, that in the churches, in the churches, anti-Semitism was preached from the pulpits and that's how anti-Semitism started and flourished and by the years '38 and so forth, so on, it was already and ah, they were all very happy to get rid of the Jews.

**Did you have any friends in school who were in this...**

I had friends. I think, I think they were all my friends with whom I went to school. I had friends, I thought so.

**So were you surprised to see this?**

I was very, very surprised to see them. And we had neighbors, you know we were close neighbors ah, we had there a neighbor three houses down whom uh...Shabbos, they used to come in, in the winter to light the fire and since I remember, I grew up with them, I went to school with them and so forth. And then I, I, I, what's happening, what's happening, and they were not our friends and they were our worst enemies.

**What about Horthy?**

Well, Horthy, Horthy, what we thought was, he wasn't anti-Semitic. But we understand after the war, after the war Horthy wanted to stop the deportations and so forth and then, uh, uh, Szálasi came into the regime and Horthy was arrested. At the end of the war, Horthy was arrested by the Germans. Details I don't know. I was in concentration camp then. But the history is that he was arrested by the Germans.

**Did your father talk about the politics, Horthy, Szálasi the other...parties?**

No, no, we were...really, we weren't mixed, somehow the Jewish people weren't mixed in

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politics, no. No we weren't, we weren't to do something maybe to sabotage something or, or, or something. We never, I never heard any discussion about that. And that's why I, I, I, really am thinking today. Why they had to kill off all the Jews and like that? We would never, okay there is...in a war people die, yeah, yes, I know that, I know that. But we were not involved. Really the Jewish community were not involved in politics.

**Do you remember when the Germans came?**

Oh, I remember, I remember, well naturally the, the Hungarians came first to us in '38, and then came the Germans.

**In '44?**

In '44.

**Do you remember that March '44?**

I remember in March '44. As a matter of fact, I remember the day ah, ah, my town, as I said, is a mile from the Hungarian border and they thought there will be a war so they evacuated the whole town. I went to Ungvár, I had a cousin there, an uncle really, who had children, and I was there November the 9th, 1938, when the Germans, when the Hungarian Army came in. And the Jewish people, many of this people who fought in the first war, World War I, who were ah, ah, officers of the Hungarian Army. They dressed, they put on their uniforms and their medals. And they were welcoming the Hungarian Army, they came in, they were welcoming them. They were officers in the army, they fought in, for the Hungarians and in, within months, they took away their rank, they took away their ah, ah,

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medals. They took away, they became plain Jews. They put on the, the yellow stars and they were not recognized anymore as people or as fighters for the, in the Hungarian Army, in 1914 through 1918, and they took everything away from them and they became Jews. And they took 'em to slave labor just like all the Jews from 18 'til, 'til 40 or something and uh, yeah.

**And that's when you father was taken?**

My father was in, as I said, twice during, between '38 and '44, he was twice in this forced labor camp, yes.

**In 1944, did the Hungarians, the Arrow Cross Party, were they the ones who came into your town?**

Not right away in 1944, because when, when they took us, the Horthy Party was the regime. The Horthy Party was in the regime, and I understand today that Horthy didn't like, didn't want it, the idea really to take the Jews and so forth. But then, Hitler was there, Eichmann came in, ah, the Nyilas Party came with Szálasi and they forced them in a way, in a way, Hitler, ah, Horthy, to take out the Jews, to get out the Jews and so forth and so on.

**In Kascony, Kascony did you see any Germans in the town?**

Oh yes, yes, yes. Pesach, before Pesach here, before Pesach here I seen Germans in town. Ah, ah, and, and that's, ah, ah, ah, for example, Pesach we didn't have already, we didn't daven already, we were afraid to go out all together on the streets. There were Germans there and I've seen German, oh yes, yes.

**And were they brutal?**

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Well, no, I didn't see any because we didn't went out on the street. And they did stay, you see in the nice Jewish homes, the officers did stay in the Jewish homes.

**You mean Jewish families put them up?**

Jewish families' homes, right. And uh, they never said anything that they would be brutal to them in their homes at that time.

**And then what happened?**

Well, that's what happened after Pesach right away. Right away, ah, ah, they gathered us, all the Jews, to a school yard and there was a Presbyterian minister, I can see him now. He was tall, he had a shaven head and he was in charge. He was in charge to see to it that all the Jews are in that school yard. And if somebody was missing, he asked the parents and things and they had to prove it. They weren't home, they were in Budapest or someplace, they had to prove that they are not home. And he was so proud working there, in that school yard, between these Jews. And he looked around with a happy smile that look, he's proud what he did. And he gathered everybody and then they put us on a freight wagon pulled by horses, that's...and they took us to Beregszasz, into the ghetto.

**Now, by "they" you mean the Arrow Cross people?**

That was the Hungarians all the way.

**And the Germans were there but they were just overseers?**

The Germans were there but they did not participated in gathering the Jews. We were gathered by the Hungarian, as I say by this uh, uh, minister and the Hungarian police.

**And when you arrived at Beregszasz you went straight to a ghetto?**

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Well, we, we, we, we went to a ah, ah brick factory. And they put us into barracks. Now we're there, it was Germans present already. We were under German guards...and Hungarian guards, and ah, there started already the, the, the real thing. We didn't have what to eat. Very little if you had any. In the kitchen ah, ah...they did cook something, it was not kosher, most of the people didn't eat any. And ah, we didn't know what's happening, we didn't know what's happening.

**Where did you stay in the ghetto? Did you set up places for yourself?**

Well there was a barrack there where there were, they dried this ah, ah, ah, brick. They made brick and they dried them in a barrack and that means that the walls were open because the bricks needed air. So the only thing we had is a roof over, over our head and the ground was ah, dirt, dirt ground. And that's where we put down whatever we had because right from home already they told us to take a ah, well it wasn't a suitcase, we didn't have, I didn't own a suitcase, ah, take a sheet and, and, and tie in it uh, whatever, your belongings, whatever, and that's with what we came to Beregszasz.

**What did you take?**

Well, ah, I, I, I didn't much really ah, ah, I had an extra suit and my, my mostly, my worldly possession was my tefillin. Because I was just Bar Mitzvahed a year ago and I ah, I think that was my most possession, what I hate I lost.

**Ah, let me step back for a second. You, you were twenty years old at this point?**

At this point, I was 18.

**In 1944?**

'44.

**And you took tefillin?**

Oh yeah.

**Phylacteries?**

Oh yeah.

**What did you parents take?**

Oh, they took, they took again tallit and tefillin and, and we davened in the barrack there, in the barrack there we davened and I never seen such a davening, what happened in the ghetto. In the ghetto, what happened ah, we were crying and everybody was crying. There were more crying than davening and there were a few people that really, who wasn't that religious before and they came to daven and I remember the Rabbi said that the ladies, by us in the religious community, when they get married they cut their hair off. And they wear a sheitel, a wig. And there were not many, my mother had her hair cut off ah, when she got married but there were few and the Rabbi said everybody, everybody did and we davened there and what happened there, going and its, it was like on a funeral. It was like on a funeral when you went. That's the way this ghetto looked all together.

**What did you think or what did you or your family think was going to happen?**

Well, the only thing, the only thing we knew, they gonna take us and we will have to work in a factory or whatever and those who will work will get to eat and we'll ah, survive ah, the war and so forth. That was our knowledge.

**Was your grandmother with you?**

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Nah, my grandmother yes, my grandmother was with me, my grandmother was with me and she was in that, in that ah, ah, barrack, barrack 3, Beregszasz and she had a lot of pain already. A lot, a lot of pain, she was crying during the night and ah, she keep, kept awake people. But nobody said anything. Nobody said. They know her, they know her and she didn't know what's happening. And if I, when... I helped her on the cattle car, in Beregszasz to Auschwitz.

**Before you tell be about that, how long were you in Beregszasz?**

In Beregszasz we were six weeks.

**So you slept on the ground...**

For six weeks.

**Six weeks?**

Six weeks. Six weeks. Six weeks. Now I was with the last transport. There were four transports from Beregszasz. Some were there three weeks, I was with the last. I was there six weeks.

**And what did you do for six weeks in Beregszasz?**

For six weeks during the days there we didn't, there wasn't, now, I remember one day ah, we...they took us into Beregszasz to the Shul. And our job was to sort. They had already Jewish clothes there, everything. Our job was to sort the sizes. Men's suits in one bundle and this were from Jewish people and ah, shirts and everything had to be sorted according to sizes. And this is from the Jews from Beregszasz whom they took to the ghetto into Beregszasz.



**This was daily work for you?**

Well this didn't last but maybe two weeks. And after ah, after that some people went to the kitchen and ah, ah, but there wasn't much work done in the ghetto.

**And you were still guarded by Hungarians?**

By Hungarians, yes.

**And the Germans, were they visible?**

The Germans, the office was ran by Germans.

**Tell me about the transport.**

Well ah, ah, the transport, you see this was a, a brick factory so the railroad came right there and they just took people and according to age, kind of and so forth, so on. And they put them into these wagons. Seventy, eighty to a wagon and ah, they locked up the wagon and they took them. Where we go, why we go, what, we never knew.

**Had you ever heard of Auschwitz?**

No.

**Your grandmother? You said you helped your grandmother into the car.**

Well, well ah, na, well I was there, I helped her and a lot of people were there. A lot of people were there. But the last thing she asked me, "Leibela, wie gehen wir?", where are we going? I didn't have the slightest idea.

**She called you Leibela?**

Leibela, yeah.

**Was that your Hebrew name?**

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That's my Hebrew name, Meir Leib, yeah that's my Hebrew name.

**What did you answer her?**

I couldn't, I couldn't and if... I mean a scene like that, I mean this is a real scene, a real human being, probably she will die in the next couple days. Well, I didn't know, I didn't know. And then by then, you know, you couldn't have a discussion with her. The Germans were there and I uh, went in a different barrack with my parents, in a different wagon, these cattle cars.

**Can you describe to me what that cattle car was like?**

Well, the cattle car, the cattle car....can you imagine seventy people, children and everything, and this cattle car didn't have any hygiene facilities. They never opened the door. It took three days to get there. They didn't give us water, they didn't give us nothing. We stopped in a few station... railroad stations. They cleared off everything so we didn't, we seen people inside the building, but we didn't got in contact with nobody, we didn't got nothing. And that, that, that railroad, that railroad car, what happened there again, again, ah, ah, I don't know if I could do it today, I'm sure not. It's, it's, it's unbelievable that any people, any people can do that to human being.

**Were people dying in the car?**

In the car, in my car, nobody died. I know, I know, you see again, the sick, the old, the very old, they put them in different car. So in my car there was young people with children, so nobody died in my car. Now if my grandmother didn't made it to Auschwitz, I don't know.

This is the last time I'd seen her.

**So you were on the cattle car for three days?**

Yes.

**With your parents?**

With my parents.

**You're sitting together, standing together?**

Standing together mostly. At night we tried to sit down you know, but everybody, to make room for everybody, it was, it was, together yes sir. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

**And when the doors opened at Auschwitz, what do you remember about your first impressions?**

Okay, now this is another...to be, to be honest with you, when the doors opened and all those tummel, what happened there, I really don't know. I don't remember details. I remember getting off that car and my mother had a piece of bread in her hand and she asked me if I want some. And I said, "no." And all of a sudden, I don't...and that was the last time I seen my mother in Auschwitz. That was the last time I seen my mother in Auschwitz. And I'm thinking today, those freight cars, that is a big... how these people got off. I was young. I could jump off and in that tummel, in that tummel, I...details, what happened, I really don't remember. And am trying to remember. I cannot see it.

**That's the last thing your mother said to you?**

That's, that's the last thing I seen my mother.

**And the last thing she said was to offer you bread?**

That's right, if I want a piece a bread. She had a piece, it was dried-up, I could see it. And a knife in it. And that's, that's, that's the last thing. And a little something in her hand, in my

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hand, like, uh, its not a suitcase, like from a sheet or got together and four corners tied up. Now that I'm visualizing, probably the Jewish people from Egypt went out something like that. We went out from Europe.

**What about your father?**

Now, my father...and I didn't seen my father again for four days. Ah, what happened, we went into a room and they told us to put everything down at the end of the room and undress naked, nothing and we went into a room.

**Was there selection first on the platform?**

Well outside uh, yes. There was a selection outside and the young people, the younger people like myself, the real young, and the old was taken already to the gas chambers right away, [softer] yes.

**And you went to this room?**

I went into this room and ah, we had a shower. Now, if you ask me hot water, cold water or hot shower or...I don't have any memory of it. The only thing I remember already, when we went through that shower, at a table everybody was getting a, a pants and a jacket, white and blue striped and a hat like a cap, white and blue striped. And then a little tag, a number right on your jacket and shoes, those wooden and they didn't look the sizes. We tried to exchange between us. And at the other end that's all what we had. Whatever we brought from home yet, on the other end, that's all what we had.

**Were you tattooed?**

No, I was not tattooed because a lot of people came so they sent us over to Buchenwald.

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And in Buchenwald the only thing I got, my number what I still remember, siebenundfünfzigvierhundertneunzig, 57,490, that was my number. [pause]

**When you came out at the end of this process, this room...**

Yes.

**You had a uniform.**

Yes.

**Was it too big, too small?**

Ah, mine was too big...the sleeves and I could hardly walk in it and so forth and the shoes were small. And I had it in my hand and walking towards the barrack, wherever they told me to walk a man calls to me, "Leibisch." I looked, I didn't recognize the man. I knew him all my life but he had a beard, he had a black coat and a black hat. And then I recognized them and I asked the man, "What is this?" Then I told him I smelled something here funny and he says, "You see those ovens? That's there where they burn people." [whispers] Its what he...yes. "That's there were they burn people, your parents might be there. My family might be there." And he started and, and....yeah.

**Do you remember his name?**

David Klein, David Klein. A red beard, he had. And I did find two of...two of his daughters who survived and I told them about it.

**He did not survive?**

He did not survive, no.

**What went through your mind when he told you this?**

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Oh the man is not in his mind or, or, or, or, or I just couldn't, ah, ah, ah, digest it I couldn't accept it. My brains wouldn't take something like that. [louder] What do you mean, you never heard of nothing like that. What you mean, you, you, eh, they burn there or that's the smell I feel. I, I ah, the mind, even today. If you think for a minute, one person, a hundred person, a thousand person, it's a lot of people. Here we are talking really about something, something, *six million, six million we are talking here*. And if anybody can accept this in the world, but live with that or, or explain it. It's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's mind boggling. If sometime a tragedy happens, a hundred people, even one child, one child, somebody kills a child, it's, it's, it's a big thing and it *should* be a big thing, but when you take from a small people a million, a million and a half children and you just kill them because their parents were Jews, that's the only thing they did. [pause] And today, today, today you have many schools, even colleges, where they tell you, the professor tells you, that, that this thing didn't happen. Actually everything is recorded, everything is recorded. Gen... you ask General Eisenhower, where he was, what he seen. You ask any of the brave American soldiers who we survivors are thankful to them, are thankful to them for liberating us. And you ask them what they seen. How could anybody today believe that that didn't happen? [pause; sighs]

**Let me take you back for a second to, uh, were you looking for your father there?**

Well, when we stood in line, when we stood in line, in Auschwitz, to go to Buchenwald, in four line in front of me, I see somebody who I know. He's my father. I didn't know, he was in another barrack in Auschwitz and they gathered us together with my father. So, we went

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to Buchenwald together from Auschwitz.

**How long in Auschwitz?**

In Auschwitz we were one week. And that was the time when they were really in a hurry to get the Jews out of Hungary and day and night the trains were coming into Auschwitz.

**Is this summer?**

This was in, yes, it was spring, May, May, May, the end of May already, yes, May. And there were many, many thousand. They got uh, from Hungary and surrounding Czechoslovakia and then Romania, what it belonged to Hungary, they got 800,000 Jews out of there and they got it in a very fast time. So, Auschwitz got filled up, so they took us to Buchenwald and we stayed two weeks in Buchenwald.

**By train again?**

By train, again. And we went to Zeitz, but that is a factory where they were suppose to make gasoline out of coal.

**In Zeitz?**

In Zeitz.

**Tell me about the trip to Buchenwald.**

Well, the trip to Buchenwald was, again, seventy to eighty people to a cattle car and I was there with my father together. And, naturally, we were, what happened to uh...my mother. And we were talking about that. And ah, talking and crying and I tell you, by us my father, I don't think ever hugged me kind of. You know, ah, are somehow...it wasn't...but he hugged me and what he telled me he loves me, he never did told me that, out, and so forth. And this

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discussion really was about his... when he was a young man and how he found my mother and how they lived. It was a hard life, but how happy they were. Especially when I was born, their only son. And, and, that's about it, what we really discussed, his young life, hard life, his father didn't come back from the first World War and that's that's, I think, I got to know him maybe in that day and a half or two days to Buchenwald. Because when after that, we really couldn't talk much.

**And when you arrived at Buchenwald, what were your impressions there?**

Again, again, again, I still didn't know what's gonna happen with us or what happened with the people who left in Auschwitz. This man, he told me, I didn't believe... I mean, it didn't register and somehow I didn't, the word worry, I *was worried*, but somehow I would never have believed that really that's happening.

**But your father believed it?**

If he did believe it, he didn't tell me. He never told me if he did believe it.

**Why do you think he told you about his own youth?**

Well, you know, it's a possibility that a parent, it's possible before he dies... wants to tell his son whatever he can. And that's what I have the feeling of it today. Jacob... Yakov Avinu... before he died, he called all his sons together and he told them, he bentsched them and so forth and so on. And now, at that... not at that time, but today, I believe that's what he was kind of doing between Auschwitz and Buchenwald, saying goodbye to me in a way.

**You think he had a premonition?**

That's my feeling is today and many nights, many nights, I have nightmares, I see my



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parents. I'm home with them. [pause] Even, even today, even today. [long pause]

**You said you were both in Buchenwald for a week.**

Yes, a week. And we both went to Zeitz.

**Tell me a little bit about Buchenwald. What did you do on a daily basis?**

Well, in Buchenwald, again, they did send us out to work. We were there not long, but I think twice or three times, this is already on a truck. On a truck and we went to clean up uh, it was, I don't know from bombing or from what, some houses destroyed and we cleaned those up there. But the work was not hard. I mean as such. Especially I was young then, so I didn't consider that hard. I figure if this, if that's all what it is, I'm together with my father, let's see what's gonna happen. I could do it. I could do that working.

**When you cleaned up this rubble um, uh, do you remember exactly where it was?**

No, I don't. I don't have the slightest idea where we went.

**Did anybody see you, I mean did, did...were there citizens watching you?**

Yes, oh yes, yes, sure, sure. As a matter of fact, I remember going through, going through a yard where there was pigs and they gave them to eat, you know for pigs they put there in something they give them to eat like potato peels and when we went through there, we cleaned up and everybody took some potato peels out of it and ate it. We were that hungry already and we just started out.

**So you walked past farmers?**

Yes, it must have been farmers because the...yeah.

**Did you see any civilians?**

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We seen some civilians, not many. Not many.

**Did they respond to you?**

Oh, no, no, no. I never talked to a civilian all the time I was there.

**Um, was Buchenwald relatively better than it was in Auschwitz?**

Well, I wasn't long in Buchenwald and, no, no, I think *my* situation was about the same as in Auschwitz. We got very little food and, and, ah, so forth it, it wasn't different, no in my situation, no.

**What was your father's attitude at this point? Do you think he had given up?**

Well, well, well, well, his attitude especially I was there, he tried to keep a happy face. He, he, he, he was telling me, "Wir leben..." we going to live through it and we be home and your mother will be home and he tried, he told me that many, many times, many, many times. "Der oybershter will helfen." God will help us. He helped us all the time and he will help us this time.

**Why don't we take a break on this note.**

**END OF AUDIO TAPE 1, SIDE 2**

**Uh, Mr. Weiss, this is a photograph of your Yeshiva class with you in the top row...**

Yes.

**In 1939.**

Yes.

**Obviously a very orthodox school.**

Yes.

**You have payes, sidelocks, black hat.**

Yes.

**And the next picture, this picture coming up is, um, your Rabbi.**

[softer] Right, yes.

**Also very orthodox.**

Very orthodox, yes, yes.

**Very orthodox Rabbi. So you were raised in an orthodox tradition?**

Yes, yes.

**Okay. Let me ask you a question about uh...about all of this. The last thing you said um, was about your father trying to um, comfort you and tell you that God had helped before and God will help again.**

Yes.

**Do you think that happened?**

Well, that's a good question and I would like to say right now, today, I believe there is a God. With this Rabbi, what happened, this was yet in the ghetto, this was yet in the ghetto and he had a watch what was on the table open, because the Germans said that money, valuables should be thrown in. They had a bucket there and everybody throwed in their monies, their valuables. But they did ask the Germans, "can the Rabbi keep this watch because he needs them to know the time when Shabbos comes and for religious purposes

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only and the watch is a very cheap watch.” They said okay. Another German came in and he said again to put all the valuables in that bucket and he seen this watch on the Rabbi's table. Now everybody tried to explain to this German that he asked permission and they said yes. They took him outside and in the front of everybody, this German had a big whip in his hand. Now me, my belief was so strong, that I was sure that this German, when he picks his hand up, he won't be able to hit that Rabbi. That God will not allow to hit a holy man like that. A man who gave his life day and night for the Torah, for the teaching others and what happened? He got beaten up so badly and something shook my belief, that it didn't happen, what I thought it will happen. In my mind, it should have happened. [pause]

**You mean you lost faith?**

No, I couldn't say that. I, I, I, believe, but I do have questions. I do have questions, I understand, it says if we sin, God punish you. But it says again, tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye, and a soul for a soul. But we Jews didn't kill never nobody. The punishment, if we had sins and everybody has sins, in my mind, that holy man, that Rabbi there, did not have any sin. But in my mind, everybody, but we didn't deserve the punishment. We do have questions, yes, and I say that we are the children of God and we have the right as a child ask dem Taten, the father, "Father, why?", yes we do have the right. And we do, we do ask. If in silent, saying it out loud. I've done it all these years very few times, when I say it out. But yes, we do have questions, we do have questions.

**And when your father told you this in Buchenwald...**

I, I believed it. At that time there yet, at that time there yet. Yes, God helped the Jewish

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people in Egypt. God helped the Jewish people when Haman came and God helped through the ages, the Jewish people. And I, and I did believe that, that yes, somehow we will get out of this in peace. We will go on home to our home. After the liberation in Buchenwald there was... children transport could come to America because we were liberated by the American Army and I said, “no, I want to go home. I want to see my mother. I want to see my father. I want to go home.” And I went home to my hometown finding out many, many details. A friend of mine told me, “for your mother, don't wait. I seen her going into the [quietly] gas chamber.” [pause] And right then and there I was alone again. The gentiles, I had a hard time to get a piece of bread from them. They didn't welcome us. They didn't, so I went to Budapest. And there the Joint... what we really want to thank them, I think it is the UJA today. They did kept up the displaced person camp, the DP camps. That was after the war and they fed us and they deserve the support of the Jewish community.

**Did you really believe that your parents were going to be home?**

At that time, yes. At that time, yes.

**Even after what David Klein told you....**

After, yes, yes, yes. My belief was my parents will be home.

**Alright, let me take you back to Buchenwald just for a moment.**

Yes.

**Were you beaten there? Were you ever beaten?**

My, oh, I was beaten everyday. I was beaten everyday. And really what, it, stands up in my mind, one evening we were walking home and I, me and my father were standing beside...

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one beside the other and we were talking. And German soldier came there and he said to my father, "Give him a uh, slap in the face." My father didn't do it. Then he took me out of the line, he gave me slap in the face. I seen stars. And he send me back in the line and then he took my father out of the line and he came back bleeding from the nose, from the mouth. And from that time on, he wasn't the same man, he wasn't the same man after that beating. Ah, ah, a whole night, he was bleeding and ah, he almost like he gave up. And a couple of weeks later they took out the sick people and they said they are going to take them to Buchenwald, to the hospital.

**Where did this happen?**

This happened in Zeitz.

**In Zeitz?**

This happened in Zeitz. And ah, as a matter of fact, I myself wanted to go to Buchenwald to a hospital. They didn't took me, they took me later. And they took him to Buchenwald and that was the last time I seen him. [pause]

**And you don't know what happened?**

Well, well, when I got to Buchenwald, I got there in March and this happened in January, when they took my father.

**What did he say to you before he left? Did he say anything?**

Well, he didn't said much. He didn't said much. We couldn't talk at that time, we couldn't talk, we didn't know what is happening. And what that beating done to him and me seeing him and probably me looking at him, ah, that done to both of us very much damage to our

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health, to our ah, well being, to our existence. [long pause]

**Anything else stand out about Buchenwald to you before you went to Zeitz?**

Well, no nothing in Buchenwald really. In Zeitz there was there really what as I said, we made, we were suppose to make out of coal...gasoline. We were very dirty. We, we worked with coal and we were thirsty, we never to eat, drink, what to drink, what to eat. And it was a long day and if we just stood a minute, so much beating ah... And then after the bombardment, the American bombed, when they thought they all ready to make that gasoline, they never made any gasoline. And then I remember Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur. We were working down, it was a deep uh, place where you are suppose to bring up the coal from there, the Germans, they didn't came down there. We were praying and some of us were saying, were thinking, were talking, why we deserve this. We believed in God. And we were looking for the help. And we were asking. And ah... [pause] at that point, nothing came. Nobody came, nobody came to our help. And we were looking, we were asking. And people died from left to right. It didn't, not once, happened to me. We were sleeping three in a row and by the morning, one was dead. It's, it's...and that's how, that's how really, the six million did die. [quietly] That's how.

**So do you think God answered your prayers? Their prayers?**

For me it's very hard to say... to answer this question. It's very hard to say and I am saying today that I believe. I was brought up like that. And somehow I hope someday somebody will explain it, why, why all those things happened to us.

**You said that there were German guards. Were they Wehrmacht guards?**

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They were ah, Wehrmacht and SS.

**And SS?**

They were, they were all kinds. And, and really at that time, I didn't know the difference between Wehrmacht and SS. I know the uniform and, and I didn't look. And ah, to me they were all the same. I never seen one who would have a little feeling towards a human being. He never see me, he never seen my father, he never knew what we are up to. He never knew what the Jewish people are up to. He knew one thing, they are Jewish, and that's it, that's all what they knew. [pause]

**And how long were you in Zeitz?**

In Zeitz, I was ah, ah, ah, from May 'til February. Ah, March, March, March, the end of March, I went back to Buchenwald.

**By train again?**

By train again. Everything went by train, yes, yes.

**When they gathered you to go back to Buchenwald, how did that happen did they...**

Well, they just ah, again we stood in line and they just picked up. Pick up from the line. That's what their tactic was all during, from Auschwitz on. They looked at you they know, they knew what it is, and that's all.

**So they didn't evacuate the whole camp? They just...**

No, no, no, no, no.

**Were you sick?**

They just picked out a thousand ah, sick ones...



**You were sick at the time?**

and they brought a thousand healthier ones who was in other concentration camps where probably, life wasn't that hard, what was in Zeitz.

**And how sick were you at this point?**

Well, well, ah, ah, how sick I was. Ah, ah, I don't want to jump too much but when I got to Buchenwald, why I didn't went to the concentration camp, I mean to the gas chamber, because whoever went back from Zeitz to Buchenwald, they were sent to the gas chambers right there. But, it was in there, as a matter of fact ah, we down in two weeks ago, this was already in Buchenwald, we heard that the Americans are here and ah, we will be liberated and we looked out and in the guard towers, there was no guards. We started to sing and to dance, we are liberated. It then took a couple hours and the Germans came back and they really beat us up. And that means it wasn't yet the end of it. It looks like that the Germans were able to come back to the camp. So what they did, they started to evacuate Buchenwald. And the way they did it again, because in Buchenwald there were many nationalities. There were Russians, there were Poles, there were even some Germans. But they started out with the Jews, to take them again, the Jews first directly. So, they took, they said, "Alle Juden austreten." All the Jewish to go out from the block and stand in the line. So they counted down a thousand people and I went back, all of us went back to their barracks. And I go back there and I see an old Jewish man there and I told him, didn't you hear when the German said that "Allesamt Juden austreten," that all the Jewish should go up because I know what they told me, I done it. He said look here, I cannot walk to the gate. So what's

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the difference if they shoot me here or if they shoot me on their way. When he told me that, I think he was an angel because if he wouldn't have told me that, next day, when they told me to go out, I go out, I mean. And when he told that, I figured that okay, I can walk to the gate. But I cannot walk much farther. And I stayed in next day and next day. And then they came and they started to beat people to go out to the, to be counted. And I did went, they did beat me up. And they would whip me with the gun, I went to be counted and they did counted me but, it was late already to take us on the street, because they evacuated it. We did got liberated by the Americans in Buchenwald.

**How much longer was that?**

Ah, ah, how much longer?

**How long after this one experience did you... when you went to the Appell?**

This experience within a week. Within a week, was liberated already by the Americans. And again, the liberation. I seen an American ah, ah, soldier who liberated Buchenwald. I had to ask him, "How did it look when you came in?" I was so sick I really don't remember when already the, the, the, liberation was. First of all, many of us, it happened so many times, that false alarm. But really what I did, I was, I don't remember the day, that day, again blank for me, what I did the day of liberation.

**When you lost your father, you were still in Zeitz?**

Well, when I...

**You stayed in Zeitz and he went to Buchenwald...**

I was in Zeitz, they took him to Buchenwald.

**And you were there for another three months.**

Right.

**Did you, did you form any bonds, any friendships with other prisoners at that point?**

Oh well, they were all my friends. I mean many from my hometown. And we were all, I mean, we didn't know what a friendship but, names of from where you come from or something. The only people whom I knew. But it didn't mean somehow names or something, at that time, we never dreamt that we will be liberated. At that time already, we never dreamt already, that we will be *ever* out of there. I seen so many people, so many friends of mine...died. I know a, a, a friend of mine whom I went to school with, he is in Israel, I told him exactly when his father died. I know a, a, a lady who lived here in Detroit, she moved away, when her father and brother died and a...but in the last weeks already, I never thought I was, I didn't knew much about myself and I never thought, at that time already, I never thought I would be liberated or I will be alive.

**You told me once that you ah...you didn't sit shiva for your parents and you didn't say Kaddish for your parents.**

Well, well, yes, we didn't have that chance. We didn't have a chance and that's why we are having Yizkor services each year. Between Pesach and Shevuoth, in order because that was the time they started to take us, right after Pesach and they finished after Shevuoth They cleared up whole Carpatha Rus by Shevuoth. And we do hold a, ah a, public Yizkor.

**When was the first time you said Kaddish for your parents?**

The first time I said Kaddish, I settled in Budapest ah, ah, in '44, ah, ah, Shabbos, the first

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time I got there, I went to Shul and that was the Kascony Shul. Ah, ah, that was also the Orthodox Shul before the war.

**In 1944 you said?**

Before...but after the war, after the war, when I got to Budapest. And there was other things too really. Because for example, to pray, we did pray, when we were standing in Appell, let that be in Buchenwald, let that be in uh, Zeitz, ah, ah, we formed a Minyan and we davened right there till we waited and so forth. Not loud and things. But we believed, we asked God, we knew, we hoped, and we knew that the only people who can help us is God.

[pause; crying]

**When you were liberated did everybody daven then too or pray then too?**

Well, at that time, at that time, right away, I was there about ten days and I didn't...I, I was in my bunk and uh, I really don't know what happened. Ah, I don't know, I really don't know what happened and things. I must have been more sick than I thought and ah, when they told me that I, uh, I have a chance to go to America from there or to go home to my city, I chose, I believed with my full heart that my father and, and my mother, because she was young, I mean...forty-three, she was young looking uh, and, and, and I didn't dreamt that this, and this was after liberation yet, I didn't believed, I didn't knew it even. I knew something but, to my mother somehow a young person, this couldn't happen and I did, I did heard that my father when he arrived to Buchenwald, he did went to the gas chamber.

Somehow I didn't wanted to believe that either, somehow I had a hope.

**Who told you that?**

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Oh there was again, you see, you see, Beregszasz and things you had there, many of these peoples ah, ah, whom I grew up or whom I knew or, or, you could talk to people, who was there a whole time in Buchenwald.

**And was there a gas chamber in Buchenwald?**

Yes, a crematory, the details really, I, a crematoria where they burned uh, people.

**There was a crematorium, yeah.**

Because I know. And I'm sure this can be ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, this soldiers who liberated Buchenwald, they seen that persons, that people there, because they couldn't put them in the crematorium then and so forth. They seen them on the streets. So this is uh, everybody knows that, everybody should know that. Everybody should see that! Everybody should think about this!

**So at what point did you give up hoping that your parents were going to be...**

Well, for many years, really my mother, I did, I did gave up when I got home and this lady told me. Because she was very close friend with my mother and she was younger and ah, that I, that, that somehow...But to sink really in, it takes time to sink again and I think I repeated that, that people could do that. It, it, it takes time. It's, it's not just like that, okay, it happened, then it took, it takes time and yeah.

**Do you dream about them?**

Oh, I dream, I have many, many nightmares. I am many times home and we are at the Shabbos table. I am in the yeshiva. I see my Rabbi, I talk to my Rabbi and...I did talk about my Bobe whom I love very much, she loved me. That, and this happened a couple weeks

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ago, I did, I was on the street and I somehow I said I have to see my Bobe and I opened the door and I went in to see her. She was in a room, that room was bright, shiny, white and two young ladies, must have been angels, they, they did took care of her, she looked at me, she looked young, [pause] we didn't talk but, after I woke up, I'm sure today that was the Gan Eden.

**Gan Eden meaning heaven?**

In heaven, uh hum. And all the Kedosheem, the martyrs are in heaven. They are taken care of and there is such a thing as heaven. And today, I believe, I was there, I seen it. I can be witness to anybody, that there is a Gan Eden, a heaven. And this six million are taken care of and they are in the Gan Eden.

**What happened after you were liberated, you got on a train, you went back to Kascony...**

Yes, I went home...

**And then what?**

And at home, the anti-Semitism was just as big as we left it. Nobody even asked me, "Where are your parents? Where are your family? Where are the rest of the Jewish community? What happened to them?" I, I went to ask for bread to a neighbor. She did gave me a piece of bread, but that's all. She was cold. I, I... their children was in our home many, many times. We played together there. But, anti-Semitism was there. I thought they gonna to take me in; "You want a meal?" I wouldn't have eaten, I don't think whatever. Nobody had a nice word or an inquiring word; "What happened?" And then I seen there is nothing here, so I went to Budapest and ah, I wanted to go to Israel. From there we went Austria under the American

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occupation. We were there in DP camps and at that time, to Israel, naturally, it was not open. It was not that easy to go. And really, the English government even, they did not open the gates to Israel. Naturally, they would have opened it. During the war [pause] many had been saved. But after the war, after the war, after that what they seen, what they knew, what happened, this little remnants, this little survivors, with no father or mother or no means of existence. I got liberated, nobody cared. Nobody, no place, I hadn't seen anybody who would care about us. We didn't have nobody. We didn't have no means to exist. We had no home, we had nothing. And ah, yes, the United States of America, whom I love! We survivors are thankful for this country. We think this country is a wonderful country. We want to thank them. But we do want to ask though again, *why* the United States didn't open the gates for these survivors. Yeah, President Truman did open it after the war and we want to say thank you to that. But during the war there was a ship here, *St. Louis*, with survivors. They went to Cuba there, they went here, they were near Miami. They sent them back to Germany and very few survived from that. So we do have questions, we do have questions. And it's not mean questions. It's not we have questions to the government, we have questions to God, too. We do, we do. And not to be disrespectful. We are not disrespectful. The Jewish people as we say, they are the chosen people. We do would like, kind of...why?

**Did you get to Israel?**

No. No I didn't got to Israel. We had an aunt here. My wife did, who sent us paper in '48, to come to this country.

**You got married in Austria?**

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I was married in Austria, yes.

**Were you in Vienna at the time?**

No, I was in Bad Gastein. Bad Gastein, that's a, that's a nice place and ah... yes, yes, I was married in '48 and then my wife was sick, she passed away.

**The same year?**

No, no, no, no, no, she passed away ah, in ah, ah, seventeen years ago. And then I remarried to another survivor. A wonderful lady.

**So you came to Detroit from Bad Gastein?**

From Bad Gastein I came to West Virginia. I had an aunt there who took us up. And she took us to West Virginia and we were there two and a half years. Then my wife's sister came here to Detroit, so you know, they wanted to be together and that's how come we wended up in Detroit.

**Um, did you talk about this when you came to the United States?**

No.

**Did you tell anybody your story?**

No. No.

**Why not?**

I, I, I... that's ah, that's ah, that's ah... somehow, in front of the children I didn't wanted to talk. I didn't wanted to hurt them, they were young. And to people even, ah, I don't think we survivors, we did came together during the years, I don't think we talked about it that much as we do today. Today, survivors will come together, let that be on a happy occasion



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or not, we will end up talk about our parents, about the ghettos, about the camps, about the Germans, about the people. Somehow, again, Hitler didn't done that himself, peoples done it, the churches, yes, yes, yes, yes. If they would be a little bit, a little bit more passionate to people, to human beings. And there is in their Bible, you should not kill and this is more than killing. This was something, there is no word for it, we say Holocaust, there's no word for it, that this should happen to any people.

**Your wife, did she know what had happened to you? You must have told your wife or maybe you didn't.**

Well, we did talk with my wife because she was...

**She was right...**

she was in concentration camp too. They were eight brothers and two sisters left there. Eight brothers and two sisters, two sisters left, eight brothers. Sure, we talked here and there and over there and mostly, after a little talk we started to cry. And that's why, somehow, we started to cry right after, just a few minutes, and then we try not to talk about it for awhile and then it came up again and we did cry a lot.

**And your children? How many children do you have?**

I have two boys. One is a lawyer in the city and one is a Rabbi in the Yeshiva Beth Yehuda in the city.

**Did they ever ask about grandparents?**

Well, I tell you. I lived ah, in northwest Detroit. It was a gentile neighborhood, a very nice neighborhood. And my son came in once and he asked me, he seen that the grandparents are

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bringing presents on the birthdays of the children. He was there, he says, “my grandparents were all dead, they don't bring me presents.” He could have been six or seven. That was the first time he asked me about the grandparents.

**What did you say?**

Well, I tried to tell him a little, but I didn't told him much. I didn't told him much. They died. And ah, in Europe yet, and your grandparents were wonderful people. If they would be here, they would bring you presents. They would love you. And but very little really, very little really. And today, today if I could say anything to my boys *and* maybe to the second generation of survivors, and to the third generation of survivors. "Zachor V'al Tishkach. Remember, you should never forget what happened". And ah, you should take part, you should join the survivor organization so it should never happen again. And we hope and pray to God that it never will.

**I think that's a good place to stop. Thank you.**

**Holocaust Survivor**

**Oral Histories**

**MICHAEL WEISS**

**August 9, 1995**