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## Henry Zyndorf and Sylvia Zyndorf oral history interview

Henry Zyndorf

Sylvia Zyndorf

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**Christopher Patti:** Okay, today's date is October 29, 2010. We're interviewing survivor Henry Zyndorf. My name is Chris Patti. We're in Lutz, Florida, in the United States of America. The language is English, and the videographers are Nafa Fa'alogo and Richard Schmidt.

Okay, Mr. Zyndorf, thank you so much for your time today, and we'll just start off with the easy questions. Can you tell me your name at birth, and can you spell it for me?

**Henry Zyndorf:** Henrik.

CP: And how do you spell that?

HZ: H-e-n-r-i-k.

CP: All right. And what was your date of birth?

HZ: December 25, 1925.

CP: Okay, and that makes your current age eighty-five, is that correct?

HZ: Eighty-five is going to be in December.

CP: In December you'll be eighty-five.

HZ: Yes.

CP: Okay, thank you. And where was your place of birth?

HZ: Sosnowiec, Poland.

CP: And is that S-o-s-n-o-w-i-e-c?

HZ: Right.

CP: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about your parents?

HZ: My parents, we had a bakery and we made a good living. We had some people working for us: we had at minimum like ten people working.

CP: And what was your father's name?

HZ: Israel.

CP: Did he go by Sal as well?

HZ: Israel. My son, his name is Sal, but it's Israel.

CP: Okay, and what was your mother's name?

HZ: Sara.

CP: And you had a sister and a brother, too; can you give me their names?

HZ: Yeah, my sister was Rivka Leah, and my brother was Alter Chil.

CP: And is that A-l-t-e-r C-h-i-l?

HZ: Yes, right.

CP: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit more about your family growing up, about, you know, who your father was and who your mother was and how they were?

HZ: My father was busy in the bakery and my mother worked in the store in the bakery.

CP: Do you remember—how was your childhood growing up? When you were young, were things—did you have a happy childhood?

HZ: Everything was okay till thirty-nine [1939].

CP: Till thirty-nine [1939].

HZ: Everything started in thirty-nine [1939], when they start the advertising, that's Jewish business and Jewish this. Not to come, not to buy from Jews and not do this. Was a lot of anti-Semitism.

CP: The anti-Semitism and boycotts and—

HZ: Oh, yeah, in Poland.

CP: And you said that your town was the closest to Germany, is that right?

HZ: Right!

CP: Five kilometers?

HZ: Right, Germany was only about five kilometers away.

CP: And so when the Germans came, they came into your town.

HZ: Right away, by us. We were the first ones.

CP: Were you—

HZ: It was on a Friday. It was—what is it, September. The war started the first, the first of September, and they were there. And the whole army came in the town, the German army, and there was no resistance to the Germans.

CP: Was there no resistance because they were caught unaware?

HZ: No, they were aware, but they were talking big but they didn't do a thing. They were just running away. Because we had people what they were (inaudible), they used to work for us, and on Sunday they came through, back. They said, "We haven't got time to go and do anything, just keep on running away from the Germans."

CP: And so you were about fourteen years old, is that right, when that happened?

HZ: That happened in thirty-nine [1939].

CP: So—

HZ: Fourteen years old.

CP: Do you remember what you were thinking at that age? Were you scared?

HZ: You couldn't believe it, what had happened right away. There was no resistance from the Poles. Because a lot of them, like in our neighborhood around, there were a lot

of Poles would say—actually Germans, because they used to live in Germany; they're like *Volksdeutsche*. So everything changed right away. You couldn't even trust our neighbors.

CP: And you told me a couple things about when the Germans first came in: you said you saw them making examples of some of the Jews. Do you remember that story, where you would see people being hung and that sort of thing?

HZ: Oh, yes. We had to go out and look where they hung all those—the Jews with their businesses or something.

CP: And were they just on the side of street?

HZ: Right in the middle, on the trees; they hung them right in front.

CP: At that point, did you—was it worse than you could have even imagined?

HZ: Oh, we couldn't imagine that much. And from then on, there was nothing; you couldn't even walk the sidewalks because this wasn't for the Jews.

CP: You mentioned that the Polish people were often worse than the Germans.

HZ: Oh, yes.

CP: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

HZ: Some of them just became like the *Volksdeutsche*, like German—not nationals, but something, and they were worse than the Germans. We had to watch more for them.

CP: Why do you think that was?

HZ: I don't know. They thought that Germany is going to take over the whole world and they're going to be with them. We had our neighbors over there with the son—they had

two sons: one was okay but the other one became right away—he put on the *Hakenkreuz* and said, “I’m a *Volksdeutsche*.”

CP: So one of your neighbors, there was a good son and a bad son.

HZ: Good son, that’s right.

CP: And the bad one, immediately he went over to the German side.

HZ: Right, right, sure.

CP: Can you tell me what happened to him?

HZ: To him? The better one—because I was in Poland a few years back, and I talked to his sister and the mother was still alive. They said they killed him right away. When the Russians came in, they killed him.

CP: Oh, so he ended up getting killed.

HZ: Because the Russians were very mad at all the bad Polacks. They tried to kill them, the IK [*sic*].<sup>1</sup>

CP: Were there a lot of Jewish people in your area?

HZ: Oy, we’re all Jews. In our city was like 30,000 Jews.

CP: Was it pretty Orthodox?

HZ: It had all kinds, different kinds.

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<sup>1</sup>This may be a reference to the *Komitet Informatsii* (Committee of Information), a Soviet intelligence agency in operation from 1947 to 1951;



CP: What kind was your family?

HZ: No, we were like here, Conservative, not really Orthodox.

CP: But it was still a part of your everyday life and the culture?

HZ: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

CP: So what happened next? You're fourteen and the Germans come in, and then what happened next in the story?

HZ: No, next we was—it was home and we had to go to work every day. We didn't even get paid, but we had to go to work. And in forty-two [1942] they took me to the—it was, at least in this time, like a working camp, and then a year later it became concentration camp.

CP: And that was Sakrau [Zakrzów]? Is that right?

HZ: Sakrau, yes.

CP: S-a-k-r-a-u?

HZ: Right.

CP: Where—you said—were you working before they took you to the camp, and you said—

HZ: No, we had to walk the streets and everything, clean the streets. And we were not allowed even to walk on the sidewalks.

CP: What was—can you tell me of how—the story of how you got taken to Sakrau? When did that happen? How did that happen?

HZ: It happened—we had to get—we had to be together on—what is it? On a field, on a soccer field.

CP: In a soccer field.

HZ: They got us all together there, and picked out: you go to the camp and you go here and you go there.

CP: And so they were sorting out the people who seemed like they could work?

HZ: Right, right. Like this, they showed like this: you go here and you go the other. So at this time I was separated from my brother and sister and my parents. This was the last time I saw them.

CP: That's the last time you saw your family?

HZ: That's right.

CP: At the time, did you have any intuition that that would be the last time, or was it just —?

HZ: No, we didn't notice it's going to happen, if anything will come out of it, because the Germans were all over. Everything that's—everything is going to belong to Germany.

CP: Did you get to say goodbye to anyone in your family? Or did it just—

HZ: Nothing at all, just like this.

CP: Just, they got separated and they were—

HZ: Because the Germans were right there, said, "You go this way and you go the other way."000

CP: And since you were a young, strong man, you got taken to the work camp.

HZ: Right, sure.

CP: Can you tell me about your time—you were only in the labor camp for a short—in that labor camp for a short period of time, is that right?

HZ: Right. And then we went to another camp.

CP: What were you doing in Sakrau? Was that when you were making bricks?

HZ: That was Freiwaldau [Jeseník, Czech Republic].

CP: Oh okay, so that was the next camp?

HZ: That was making the bricks, *Dachziegelwerke*. I think they still in business now. *Dachziegelwerke* (inaudible).

CP: That's who you were making the bricks for?

HZ: Right.

CP: Can you tell me how you got to Sakrau to Freiwaldau—can you say that for me, the second camp?

HZ: Freiwaldau, yes.

CP: How did you get from the first one to the second one?

HZ: They took us by trains, in these open boxcars, loaded up. And it wasn't too far to go, because it was—this was Poland and this was Oberschlesien [Upper Silesia].

CP: Do you remember what you were thinking when you were going from one to another?

HZ: We were thinking that we not going to see anybody no more, because we just didn't have no hope any more. And all our friends, we were together, and most of them didn't even survive.

CP: That was something that I found quite interesting when we were talking before. You said you were able to make a number of friends while you were in Freiwaldau. Is that right?

HZ: Right, right.

CP: How did that happen?

HZ: No, we were working together.

CP: Can you walk me through, like, an average day in that—in the second camp? Like, would you—

HZ: We have to get up at four o'clock in the morning, was *Appellplatz*, and get together outside. And they directed where we going to work and what we going to do. And we were lucky enough that when we—we were around the forest, so when we walked through the forest to go to work, we picked up, like, berries or something, or mushrooms. There, if we grabbed it, we could eat. But the Germans couldn't see it. We just walk in groups. If you could grab it, we grabbed it.

CP: Were you risking your life to grab that?

HZ: Oh, yes. Otherwise, they were shooting you. We had good Germans. We had the older Germans, they weren't as bad; but the young ones, the Hitler-Jugend, they were bad.

CP: They were trying to prove themselves, maybe?

HZ: Right.

CP: You also mentioned that the kapos were worse than—

HZ: No, the Jewish kapos were the worst ones. They said, “You’re not going to live over the wars. I can do whatever I want with you.”

CP: You mentioned one kapo in particular. Do you remember that?

HZ: Yes.

CP: Can you tell me a little bit about him?

HZ: What’s his name?

CP: Was it Silverberg?

HZ: Yes. He said, “You’re not going to live out the war anyhow. So, I can do whatever I want with you.” And then he got killed, because right after the war, he came back to Buchenwald when we were liberated, and he thought he’s going to be okay and he’s going to do good. But in Weimar, outside Buchenwald, all those people from Buchenwald went to Weimar. He didn’t have much clothes, but with underwear we were going—and he came with another group, and he thought—but they almost killed him right there, the people who were in camp with him.

CP: Do you have a—

HZ: And he was lucky that we had the Americans there, so they didn’t let them kill him; they just took him away.

CP: Do you have any other particular memories that stick out from your time in that second camp?

HZ: Buchenwald?

CP: In Freiwaldau?

HZ: Freiwaldau, yes. There are a lot of people—I used to have a cousin what he lived in Chicago, and he moved; he moved to—not to Boynton [Beach], but to Delray [Beach]. So he was there, but he died a couple years ago.

CP: What did you do—you said you made some friends and you got close to the men that you were working with. Did you guys do anything for fun? Did you have any sort of recreation?

HZ: No, no fun.

CP: None?

HZ: No such thing. You were happy that you got by the day.

CP: Just surviving.

HZ: Right. You knew that you have to get up at four o'clock, up to the *Appellplatz*.

CP: When you were doing so much work, what were you eating to be able to do work like that?

HZ: They gave us some food. They gave us in the morning some food, and then when we got back from the work they gave us some food. It wasn't much. It was junk.

CP: Do you remember any particular, like—?

HZ: Like (inaudible), like dried vegetables, and they mixed and made a soup from it and stuff like this. And what was—like, sometimes if it was a holiday or something, they gave us like horsemeat. And this was the biggest thing.

CP: Wow! And then from there, you went to a third camp, is that correct?

HZ: Right.

CP: Can you tell me about how you got to the third camp?

HZ: We were walking to—from—

CP: Kittlitztreben [Poland]?

HZ: From Freiwaldau, we went to Kittlitztreben. This was already a concentration camp.

CP: Is that K-i-t-l-i-t-z-t-r-e-b-i-n [*sic*]?

HZ: Kittlitztreben, yes, right.

CP: Can you tell me a little bit about that camp?

HZ: That camp was—no, we had to get up also, always four o'clock in the morning we got up, and we got something to eat around—after; it was around seven o'clock, because we were staying out on this, the field over there. And then they gave us something to eat and go to work.

CP: What kind of work? You were doing different work at this camp, is that right?

HZ: Yes, I was making *dachziegel*—like bricks, those flat bricks for the roofs.  
*Dachziegelwerke*.

CP: You mentioned also building bunkers and munitions?

HZ: The bunker was later.

CP: Oh, that was later?

HZ: That was in Kittlitztreben.

CP: Okay. So, at Kittlitztreben—

HZ: Right.

CP: Um—

HZ: Bunkers in the forest. We build bunkers for the ammunition for the Germans and all this stuff.

CP: Do you have any other memories from that camp that you'd like to share?

HZ: Oh, it was a lot of memories over there. We just couldn't do anything, because if you done something and we had the Jewish kapos, they was worse than the others. So they squealed on you or something, and when you came back to the camps they knocked the heck out of you.

CP: Did you ever get beaten up by them?

HZ: Oh, yeah, many times. But you couldn't say nothing, because if you would say something the next one will kill you.

CP: Did you—how did you deal with that, watching your friends and yourself—?

HZ: Oh, we just had to get by. All we wanted to do just to live another day.

CP: Yeah. So there was still—even though it seemed hopeless, there was still that hope to survive?



HZ: Oh, yes. And then when things start changing, we saw already that we had the Germans, the guards over there. The older ones were telling us that it start going bad for the Germans.

CP: The Germans were telling you that?

HZ: Right, the old Germans. Right, the *Wachmann*. The old *Wachmann* would say—they were watching the camp because the young ones were at the fronts, so the older ones who taking care of the *Häftlinge*. And some of them was—the old ones said they didn't like it because they couldn't do nothing, but they told us—we start getting too much trouble, and the Russians start coming back. And the Russians, they didn't want to take no prisoners; they were killing them.

CP: And then from that camp, that's when you started the march to Buchenwald?

HZ: To Buchenwald, right.

CP: Is that right? Can you tell me—

HZ: Nine weeks, to Buchenwald.

CP: Can you tell me that story? When did that start? How did that happen?

HZ: This happened in February. We were going for nine weeks to get to Buchenwald.

CP: Do you remember the—can you describe to me the day that you left? What was it like, and how did they organize you? Did they just call everybody out from the bunkers? Did they know the war was going bad at that time?

HZ: No, it wasn't—we didn't go to bunkers anymore, we were just going from one barn to another barn. That's where they kept us.

CP: How many people were marching?

HZ: [When] we left, it was almost—about 1400. About 600 was left to come.

CP: By the end of the nine weeks, 600.

HZ: Right.

CP: And during our first interview, you told me that people were dying like flies on the road—

HZ: Right, on the road. Sure.

CP: And did you just have to keep walking when you—

HZ: We kept walking, and if we found something to eat when they send us into all those barns—some wheat or something that you could scarp to eat, plain wheat or something, whatever they had in the barns.

CP: How was your health at the time of that march?

HZ: It was not good. Right after the war, I couldn't walk two steps.

CP: Wow. But yet you were able to walk for nine whole weeks.

HZ: Right, right. Nine weeks, this was enough. And we had to take—like, in February, we had to go to take like a bath, into the streams, the water streams. We had to go in and wash; that's why people died like flies. And we had to bury them on the road.

CP: Is it difficult to remember this, even today?

HZ: I just don't want to remember, because it's too much. I didn't even want to tell the kids for years. Never mentioned it.

CP: Do you feel that it's important to share it today, though?

HZ: Yeah, today is, because they always want to know but we didn't try to sit down and tell them. But I had friends, what we went together. Some lived after the war. We have some in Cleveland and all over.

CP: That's amazing that people that were there with you at that time, you still know to this day, and you still have those connections to this day.

HZ: Oh, yes. Yeah, but mostly died, and not too many left.

CP: Do you feel an extra sense of responsibility, being one of the remaining survivors to tell your story?

HZ: That's what we try to tell, because like twenty years ago or ten years ago, I wouldn't tell nobody the stories.

CP: Was it—would you not tell because it was hard, or because—

HZ: It was hard. It was—people couldn't realize what we went through.

CP: Did you feel like people might not even believe it because it's so—

HZ: Right. That's what I'm always afraid of.

CP: And that's why we need people like you to speak from your experience, I think.

HZ: No, but this is all recorded and it's all proven.

CP: Yup. A couple more things about the march to Buchenwald: you said there was a Jewish doctor that saved you.

HZ: Yes.

CP: Can you tell me about that?

HZ: The doctor was right—he was from Kraków, and he helped us all. But he couldn't help, he didn't have no medications or something; but what he could do, he done it in Buchenwald. And another thing: when we all got to Buchenwald, most of the groups, they took them out and they start walking again, because the Russians were coming in and they tried to run away. The Germans tried to take us away. So what happens, they took most of them into the forest and shoot them right into the forest. And by us in Buchenwald, the doctor—was one group, we were hiding, and then the Germans came in [asking] who was left here to still work. And the doctor says, “Whoever is left cannot work.”

CP: And so he—

HZ: And that's why I was left over there.

CP: And he let you be one of those people that couldn't work?

HZ: Right, with the people couldn't work.

CP: Wow. So after you got to Buchenwald, it wasn't very long until you were liberated, is that correct?

HZ: In Buchenwald only—what was it? About ten, twelve days.

CP: Ten days you were there, yeah.

HZ: Liberated by the Americans.

CP: Did you know before liberation that it was coming, was there a sense of that?

HZ: No, no we didn't know. Just army, the American army came through.

CP: That was April 11, 1945.

HZ: Right, right.

CP: Can you tell me about that day, like what happened on that day?

HZ: It was on a Wednesday afternoon when we were liberated. And the Germans—the water was poisoned, everything was done. So the American army was bringing in the tanks with water from Weimar.

CP: So when the Germans realized—

HZ: It was five, five kilometers from Buchenwald, in Weimar. So the Americans start bringing water, and they gave us goulash and all this stuff and it killed another 5,000 people.

CP: Because they ate too much?

HZ: Too much, right. They gave us pieces of butter and margarine, the whole thing to eat. And then, after so many start dying, they start changing the diet.

CP: And give you little rations instead.

HZ: Right.

CP: You said that—

HZ: (inaudible) and other stuff.

CP: You said that there was a warehouse that was open, and that was probably the worst thing, 'cause you could take all this stuff and—

HZ: Right, right.

CP: And your systems were used to eating so little food that—

HZ: Right, right.

CP: And you mentioned that the Germans poisoned the water.

HZ: They poisoned the water.

CP: Did they do that when they knew that it was kind of a lost cause and so they just said, “Poison everything—”

HZ: Right, right they knew this.

CP: And run away.

HZ: People would just leave and they have to run away.

CP: Did you know, when the Americans came in on that Wednesday afternoon, did you know immediately that you were being liberated?

HZ: Oh, sure, we saw the American army. [Dwight D.] Eisenhower came a few days later, but [George S.] Patton came right away.

CP: You mentioned that all those who were still alive, they had to register right there.

HZ: Oh, yes.

CP: And you still have that paper, is that correct?

HZ: Right, I have it. Sure.

CP: And we'll take a look at that afterwards. About how many people were liberated that day, were still alive?

HZ: Oh, it was—I don't know. I know 5,000 died after we were liberated, because we were just piled in—in every corner were all those people that came from the camps.

CP: Did you get sick from eating too much?

HZ: No, I got sick. I got typhoid. And a good thing we had the Americans, because they gave us medications, whatever they could, and start giving us better diets.

CP: You said the Americans gave you over to the Russians, is that right?

HZ: No, because the Americans left Buchenwald. They gave the whole thing, the whole—like Thüringen: it was like a state, like here, like Ohio. It was in Thüringen Buchenwald was, so they gave it back to the Russians. So that's why we left with the Americans. We had a choice to stay with the Russians or go with the Americans, and we went therefore to Bamberg.

CP: Can you tell the story about going to Bamberg and you were on the train, but then you decided to—

HZ: We left it, yes. In a whole group we left and we went down to the city in Bamberg. And the mayor gave us already food stamps and other stuff to start living. And he gave us quotas, like the Germans that lived in the houses or something, because they had to give up one room for the people, for the *Häftlinge*.

CP: So you had a place to say?

HZ: Right.

CP: And if I remember correctly, you actually were on a train and you just decided to leave the train—

HZ: To get off, yes.

CP: Right?

HZ: Yes, at Schlüsselfeld. Yeah, I have the pictures there, with the people there.

CP: And then, I think the next part of the story is where you meet your wife. Is that correct?

HZ: Yes.

CP: Okay, so I think we might want to save that for the second interview part. How much more time do we have?

**Nafa Fa'ologo:** Half an hour.

CP: Oh, okay. Wow.

HZ: Yeah. I had the—typhus. I said the typhoid.

CP: Yeah, you mentioned that you were sick right at the end.

HZ: Mentioned the typhoid, sure.

CP: Well, there's a few last questions, then, that I'd like to ask you right now. And you mentioned that in telling your story, you want to make sure that people know that your story—everything's true from day one, right? You said that in the first interview.

HZ: Right.

CP: You also—would you like to talk a little bit about your feelings about God and faith after surviving?



HZ: After surviving we didn't believe in anything anymore, because we had people that we knew in one camp and everything, and they couldn't—nothing. They were just dying like flies.

CP: Do you still feel that way today?

HZ: It just changes a little, but not as much as we were before the war. Not the same thing.

CP: But still, culturally, being Jewish is a big part of—

HZ: Right, that's the biggest part is just being Jewish. We still believe that the Jews, they were—they're always saved with the Inquisition, with everything else, they still live through. That's all what it matters. And now we have an Israel; we never thought we going to have it. So that's the only thing what we live for.

CP: And can you tell me a little bit about how you've lived with these memories for sixty years now?

HZ: We tried to block them out, but we couldn't. We were with friends for the—even after the war, we met friends. And before the war I had a friend—he's still in Montreal—they were two brothers. One died just two days before we were liberated in Buchenwald, and the other one is living now in Montreal. And we were sleeping on the same bed all the time, up and down, Abramovich. And he is related to the Pilas.<sup>2</sup>

CP: When you were younger, was it easier to not think about these memories, and do you think about them more?

HZ: It was never easy.

CP: Never easy.

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<sup>2</sup>Salomon and Herta Pila were also interviewed for the Holocaust Survivors Oral History Project. The DOI for their interview is F60-00033.

HZ: Never easy.

CP: Did you—

HZ: What we went through, you could never believe it. I had friends what we went in camp together and everything, and one of his cousins went to Israel; he was working for the Dan Hotel in Israel. And the other one was staying in Cleveland together. He died and the other one died, and they was very close friends.

CP: And are there any—

HZ: Sheet metal men, sheet metal people.

CP: And are there any other stories that you can think of right now that you would like to share from your experience?

HZ: You can ask me whatever.

CP: Okay. I guess the last question then that I have for right now is: Do you have any message for someone who might watch this interview in the future, who wants to learn about—?

HZ: Yeah, just it shouldn't happen again. Just stay away and not hate people. Because we just here for a short time, all of us, and hate is not going to do anything good to nobody. That's why even today I worry all about what's going on in the Middle East or here or there. People are not here forever, so they shouldn't go through all those things. Be more close to each other, and no hate.

CP: Well, that's very profound, and thank you so much for sharing your experience with us today.

HZ: You're welcome.

CP: Thank you.

*Part 1 ends; part 2 begins*

**Carolyn Ellis:** The date is October 29, 2010. I'm interviewing survivor Sylvia Zyndorf. My name is Carolyn Ellis. We are in Lutz, Florida, in the United States. We're using English, and the videographers are Nafa Fa'alogo and Richard Schmidt.

This is tape one with Sylvia Zyndorf. Thank you so much for being willing to be interviewed and to tell your story. I'd like to start with your saying your complete name for us.

**Sylvia Zyndorf:** Sylvia Zyndorf.

CE: Okay. And what was your maiden name before you were married?

SZ: Gips.

CE: And that's G-i-p-s?

SZ: Yes.

CE: Okay. And you also said that you have had a Jewish name?

SZ: Yes, Zlata-Cirka.

CE: Okay, and that is spelled Z-l-a-t-a dash C-i-r-k-a. And then your last name was Gips.

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Okay, and your date of birth?

SZ: July 7, 1930.

CE: July—

SZ: Seven-fifteen [July 15].

CE: Yes, okay, July 15, and 1930. And then, would you like to talk about your birth date a little bit, why it's sometimes different?

SZ: Yeah, I can talk. I mean, when we came—before we went to, you know, concentration [camp], or even sweeping or cleaning when we came into Częstochowa, they said if you're too young they wouldn't use you. You know, you go to the left or to the right. The older you say you are, the better it is. So on the front people were saying. So, we changed two years, thirteen from—thirteen was fine. So I was eleven instead, and they took me when I said I'm thirteen, not eleven. So I kept that till I was free, you know, 1928.

CE: Okay, so sometimes your birthday is listed as July 15, 1928.

SZ: I didn't change because I got married too young, so I didn't change—

CE: You didn't change it?

SZ: My brother left it like 1930. He changed it, I didn't.

CE: You didn't change yours. Okay. All right, so—

SZ: It doesn't matter, two years.

CE: It doesn't matter now, does it?

SZ: At that time it meant my life and everything, and a lot of people did—even my little sister was with me, like I said, Chaya. I gave her three years, older.

CE: You made her three years older? Okay. And how old are you now?

SZ: Nineteen twenty-eight.

CE: So how old does that make you now?

SZ: That makes me eighty. I just had in July.

CE: You just turned eighty?

SZ: Yes.

CE: Congratulations. I just turned sixty.

SZ: That's good.

CE: Okay. And the city and country where you were born?

SZ: I was born in Poland in Bodzanów.

CE: And that's spelled B-o-d-z-a-n-ó-w.

SZ: Yes.

CE: And what is that near?

SZ: That's near Płock, another city, and Warsaw not far.

CE: Okay, and that's—

SZ: Poland wasn't as big as the United States, so—

CE: Okay, and that's spelled P-l-o-t-z [*sic*].

SZ: Yeah.

CE: So, how big was the town you grew up in?

SZ: The town—well, most of them, maybe it was 5,000 Jews or not, but it wasn't too big. But my grandparents were living there, and of course, you know, they gave my father the house. And most of them who came together, you know, from all over to Poland lived from the parents' homes.

CE: So there were about 5,000 people there—

SZ: Jews.

CE: Five thousand Jews, you think?

SZ: Yeah, it must have been more, maybe, you know.

CE: Okay, so a lot of Jewish people lived—

SZ: Yeah, most of them.

CE: Lived in that town.

SZ: All around, if I remember, most of them were Jewish.

CE: And what was your neighborhood like?

SZ: It was nice, you know. We had a grocery. See, a long time on one side was a grocery and one side yard goods and a store. We had two big bedrooms and a kitchen. And the store, you didn't have toilets like here; you have to go out to the—like, in the back there was, like, a farm. You know, like my father was going around with my mother together

the whole time, and they took a horse and buggy. There were no cars or anything at that time.

CE: And who lived in the house with you?

SZ: Me, of course. Before the war broke out we were seven kids, my grandmother, and my father and my mother: ten people.

CE: Ten people. And let's go over the names of your siblings. Your sister was—

SZ: Yeah, it was Rifka—

CE: Rifka, R-i-f-k-a.

SZ: Yeah, and Leah, and Chaya, the one who was with me.

CE: Okay, and her name is spelled C-h-a-y-a, right?

SZ: Yes. We gave her ten years, you know, that way—she really was seven, you know.

CE: She was seven, and you gave her ten years.

SZ: Yeah, everybody in the concentration, even outside, helped the work for her and everything, at the ammunition factory.

CE: Okay, and then you had another sister named Molly?

SZ: Yeah, but I didn't know where she was.

CE: Okay, and then you had two brothers, right?

SZ: Yeah. Teddy I knew because he came back later. He was in the partisan; that's the underground.

CE: Okay, and then Harry.

SZ: Harry was in the concentration—in the back, you know. It was divided: the men in the back and the women in the front.

CE: Okay, and he's still—

SZ: Hasak, yeah.

CE: Okay. He's still alive in Cleveland, right?

SZ: Yeah, he's in Cleveland.

CE: Okay. But if we go back—if we go back now to your childhood, they were all living in the house.

SZ: Yeah, we were all living in the house. And we had, like I said, the store, and most of the kids helped out in the house because my grandmother took care of us and my father and my mother were gone, you know, to sell yard goods. They was, like, go to big—you know, they go to farms or anyplace, and grocery and stuff like that. They came back because my father was very religious, I mean Orthodox; my whole family was. And he had only one brother, and the brother lived a little farther away in another city, but they didn't have any kids. But we had—you know, my grandmother—you know, my grandfather died. None of the kids remember, must have been a long time. But my grandmother lived with us the whole time. And we just—whoever was older went to school. I went two years to school, because—

CE: Two years?

SZ: —over there you started when you were seven. And we—I was nine, so I went to two years.



CE: Two years of school.

SZ: In September—the third year I didn't go, because the Germans came in at that time.

CE: Okay, all right. Before we go to that, tell me some more about—that you remember about growing up?

SZ: Well, it was nice. You know, everybody was taught—like I said, with the grandmother—taught to keep twin and take one of the other—you know, the seven kids. But I was like the middle. My sister Molly was the oldest, and then Teddy, the one in the partisan, was the second.

CE: Okay. And he was your twin brother?

SZ: Yeah—no!

CE: No, Harry was your twin.

SZ: Harry; he's still in Cleveland. But the others were the youngest after me, with my brother.

CE: Okay.

SZ: And of course there was four kids after us and three before.

CE: Okay. Did you do—taking care, did you take care of your siblings?

SZ: Oh, yeah, everybody took care.

CE: Everybody did.

SZ: Yeah. You know, we watched the store and everything, because there was a lot of—see, the grocery was in the little bags, staying around anything that was available; you

know, one side was the yard goods. So we were watching the store. The gypsies used to come in, they shouldn't steal; others shouldn't—one watched till the store closed. Then we ate and we went up on the attic, and up there was the thing you could sit and play and the kids get together and everything. Every child had a responsibility to take care of everything, when my mother and father was always busy.

But we had—my mother, you know, had five sisters, but two lived in the same city where we lived. One was from—with my other grandmother, my mother's, you know. Grandmother lived there and her sister lived; but they had seven kids, too, and they had like a (inaudible) sweet ice cream cakes, things like that. Well, we had most of the friends and (inaudible) for everybody you knew. You were together, and we were very close, everybody in the city, you know. It wasn't—we were very close. Well, my mother had three more sisters, but they lived—one who lived in Warsaw. That's why we were going—I was going with my father, you know, to see Warsaw—that's a big city, you've probably heard—where there was grocery. In Łódź, my mother's sister had the factory, very, very well off, and they were making the yard goods. And so I was going with my father; sometimes he took me to stay with my aunt. One was in Płock. But they all had seven to nine kids: nobody alive, none of them.

CE: So you were close to your father?

SZ: Oh, very. My father, he was still young and everything. He was thirty-nine; in fact, I got some, you know, papers after. And my mother was thirty-seven, two years younger.

CE: And your father's name was?

SZ: Chaim Moshe.

CE: Chaim Moshe, okay. And your mother's name was?

SZ: Was Brana.

CE: Brana, B-r-a-n-a.

SZ: Yeah, Brana Goldberg, from my—you know, from my mother's side, you know. My name was Gips, my father's side.

CE: And tell me a little bit about your religious life growing up. I know you were very religious.

SZ: Yeah, well, we were religious. See, in the smaller cities, wasn't like here big synagogues. There was just like small, like you see the steeple, and that's where my father always—every day he wouldn't go to work or anyplace to lay tefillin—you know, like religious—and say the prayers and this and that. And mostly all the boys were more taught Hebrew, to read and to know and everything.

CE: And you weren't?

SZ: The girls, too.

CE: You weren't taught that?

SZ: Yeah, but not as much—you know, like the boys, that they should know how to daven, you know, how to pray, how to read Hebrew, how to do everything. And they keep a strictly kosher home.

CE: Strictly kosher home.

SZ: In fact, you know, a long time ago it was different. Even—no matter—we were ten kids—ten people, you know with the kids. But he managed every Saturday, you know, to bring somebody poor who couldn't afford to eat for dinner. We were used to it. Most of them did that.

CE: And so what was a Saturday like? Start with Friday night.

SZ: Yeah, Friday night we had—you know, he came home that afternoon from work; they wouldn't work anymore. And we had—you know, my grandmother and all of us, she was teaching and help us make meals, make cooking and doing everything. And then when we sit down, of course you always light the candles, and in the kitchen nobody worked and everything. And there was no, like—see, the stoves were mostly made for, like—from, you know, stone in the big things. And the same thing with the cooking: you put coals underneath and on top was wood. So, why I bring this up? You know, for Saturday dinner, mostly went to the bakery; they made like a stew or something and

picked it up Saturdays. And nobody—you see, at that time the religious didn't cook on Saturday. So they brought the food home and Saturday, you know, you ate those—the foods and now all this stuff, so you shouldn't—and the kids were taught how to do it.

CE: Okay. What else did you do on Saturday?

SZ: Well, we went with the other kids, went to the park and all over together with our age. I knew everybody and everybody came together. Everybody we knew. But it was just a different life, and we didn't think about anything else. And I could go in—see, now it's different. A long time ago you didn't think that the grandmother or the father or the mother to say, “Shut up,” or this and that. But one thing my kids never—if we agreed or not, but we never would talk back. Whatever they said, that's what you were brought up to listen and pay attention and not to be like, “No, never.” That's why it helped a lot, till, you know, everything was fine.

We made a good living and everything. We had—the house was ours, you know. In fact, on one side there was—see how it was? Not so spoiled. There was on the other side the same thing: two bedrooms, with the stove, you know, with the kitchen, rented out. Instead of—you know, you could open the door and heat it. They built the homes different before. I had the picture and I think (inaudible). And that's where we were happy, made a living. My father was used to it, but he was so good: never to hurt or that somebody should get hit or beat or anything, abuse people. No such thing.

CE: Okay. And did you like school?

SZ: Oh, yes, but the only thing is I didn't—as soon as you start here, you start by five. In there, all of the—till today, Europe is seven.

CE: Okay. Were you good at school?

SZ: Yeah. I mean, I know how to read so good; but writing, not more in Polish, because I was brought up in the Yiddish. Till today, I mean, with my brother I could talk everything Polish, and I remember and everything.

CE: Did you speak Yiddish at home?

SZ: Always, 100 percent, always. Polish and Yiddish.

CE: So you spoke Polish, too?

SZ: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

CE: And when did you speak Yiddish? How did—

SZ: All the time. I mean, anytime—you know, with the grandmother. All the kids knew, perfect; in fact, that's why my daughter, you know, and my son, all three of them know.

CE: They know Yiddish?

SZ: Yeah. Oh, yes.

CE: So you taught it to them?

SZ: Yeah. Well, we were talking a lot of times, and when we didn't want them to know something we talk in Polish; but mostly Yiddish they know. Even my daughter who went to Germany—she was, you know, visiting where she was born. She could talk to them and understand.

CE: Okay. So now, let's go back to when did everything change for you?

SZ: Well, it changed in 1939, on a Friday, when the Germans came in.

CE: So you remember the day?

SZ: Oh, nobody ever forgets, never. It was horrible, horrible. They came in. Of course you see that some Polish weren't so bad, but the others, right away you couldn't sell anything, you couldn't buy. They were telling not to buy [from] Jews, not to do. And of course you have to put on a star, you know, and you couldn't go out; even little kids had to have it. And it was—but you know, still some places, the Polish weren't so bad, so they brought some food and they brought this and that. You tried the best you could.

But in fact, one of the first cousins was not far, living someplace with her family, and they killed her son right away. So she moved in and lived by us in the store, you know, but there was no store. And when you made rope—of course I don't know the thing here too. You made from straw: that means from what you cut the grass or something, you know, from dried out grass or whatever, you know, the mattresses. So you sew together, I think. Yeah, 'cause we had to make our own mattresses.

CE: So you were making mattresses?

SZ: Sure, for that's the only thing you needed, and nobody had the regular, you know, mattresses.

CE: So you made them for yourself or you made them to sell?

SZ: No, we made them for them, you know, when the cousin came. For us also, most of the time whenever it wasn't good, you know, my father had them (inaudible), he made it, it was something you change because it didn't last that long. So when they came in, the Germans, first of all whoever could to go to sweep or clean or do stuff and everything, because any time they came into any city, they set up a big place and right away put all the Jews to work. So whoever could work—and of course you couldn't go out at night, after dark, because it was against the law; otherwise, they would kill you. You couldn't sit outside or do anything, so you had to stay in the house. So it wasn't good, but still it was bad.

And in every city there was, you know, the Jewish kapos. And one opened—in fact, he watched and everything. There was a shoemaker who—at that time you couldn't buy nothing, and everything—old shoes he was fixing and everything. You know, you couldn't do it, but he did it. So he went and told on him, and of course later they killed the shoemaker.

CE: So times are really hard, and all the Jewish stores are closed at this point?

SZ: No, you couldn't sell. They were saying for you not to sell the Jewish—not to do anything for the Jews. You couldn't.

CE: And how were you getting food at this point?

SZ: Very little, but whatever you could, like I said, hiding and everything, whoever. My father, my mother, like I said—since I can remember we going, you know, to the farm, to here, to there, selling. So some were nice and they trusted them, so they were bringing to him with some—he was sharing with others, giving and all. That's how we lived through.

CE: So there were a lot of Polish people who were nice?

SZ: Yeah.

CE: And continued to be.

SZ: Yeah, that's right, because he was good to them before, in giving him a lot of time. See, the farmers didn't have much, and he trusted him, and they gave him—whatever they had, they gave him: a chicken or eggs or this or that, anything, traded it in, you know, before the war, but till forty-one [1941], in March.

CE: So you had about two years of this?

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Where your father's getting some food—

SZ: Yeah, till the Germans, you know, decided to come. And if you would see the city, you'd see this small, you know, hidden and everything. But you know who (inaudible).

CE: Before we move from that period of 1939 to 1941, so, your life really was in the house all the time?

SZ: Yeah. Oh, yeah, till forty-one [1941]. You went out. Every child who could, they would go around; otherwise you were in trouble the moment you tried to sweep, to clean, to help, to do anything for them.

CE: So you were having to do all that work, too?

SZ: Yeah. Well, everybody had to, but whatever, you know, they shouldn't do whatever they can. But they shouldn't be mad or beat you up and going to be that plenty and do this and that. But at forty-one [1941], in March, that's when they put up a law and they took us away from there.

CE: Okay, but before you go there—did they come to your house ever? Did they come into your house?

SZ: Oh, sure! They went to all the houses, those punks, the young ones, to check to see what you are, what you do, what it is.

CE: And what did they do in the house? Did they take things?

SZ: Well, whatever they didn't like, you know, that you had too much, you had to hide. You knew already. Between the mattress, between this and you know. Otherwise, sure, they took it away.

CE: Did you have secret compartments in your house?

SZ: Oh, yeah.

CE: Tell me.

SZ: In fact, you know—see, in Poland, and I guess all over Europe, there was cellars.

CE: Yes.

SZ: In there—it wasn't like here you would say a cellar. It was—you know, in the winter you put potatoes and everything was cold over there. So of course my father, when the winter came, took out a whole bunch of the stones from the thing and put it and hide.

CE: Hide it behind the stones.



SZ: Hide most of the things, most of the—you know, even when we went away. And then, of course, you had to have—all over there was wooden floors, and in the store there was a wooden floor. And then there was the ceiling; that was wooden, you know?

CE: Yes, yes.

SZ: So between there they were hiding a lot of yard goods, when they could bring something, and nobody knew how long the war is going to be. So whatever they could, they were showing the kids where they were hiding this and that. And in cellar [there was] the gold and silver, and kind of this and that.

CE: Wow!

SZ: Yes, because a lot of them did that, because over there you took out the stones, like I said, you know, the deep, and made it—and there was potatoes. Well, I don't think nobody paid attention to that, you know, when they came.

CE: But I just want to just go ahead for a moment, but then bring you back. Did you get—were you able to get any of those things that were hidden, after the war?

SZ: After the—

CE: No? No?

SZ: We didn't see a penny or nothing, because they see what was between the stuff and everything. Later on I guess they were finding other ones that were throwing down and looking on, and then maybe the Polack—maybe them. Nothing.

CE: So they were gone?

SZ: No. In fact, when we came back in forty-one [1941]—

CE: Okay. So now that's 1939 to 1941, and then what happened in 1941?

SZ: They came. They put out, you know, the large picker and all the women go and—later on, they, of course, went house to house to check if everybody's out. They told us to go outside to that big, big place where they—around the church there was a big—you know, where they had like a flea market or anything that big—and everybody went there.

CE: What did you take with you?

SZ: Whatever you could on the thing. You know, my father made those bags, what you can carry, like here you have those things. And everybody took whatever they could and they told them to come there, and then when we came there, they had those armies, what you call those motor—you know, they open. Those—what they took the army away, see, those automobiles. Not the big, big one, those all—those big ones, the open ones.

CE: The tanks?

SZ: No, no, a regular army driving—

CE: Trucks?

SZ: Truck.

CE: Trucks.

SZ: A big truck on the open—

CE: With the open bed?

SZ: Yeah, with the open. That's called an army truck because there was no allowing us trains or anything. And from there we went—we marched to Działdowo [Soldau].

CE: You marched?

SZ: Yeah.

CE: And how far was that?

SZ: Well, it wasn't far, I would say. I don't know. To Częstochowa was longer. It was about, I would say, 100 miles or whatever, and we were walking.

CE: And that's spelled Z-i-a-l-d-o-w-a [*sic*].

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Right, okay.

SZ: Yeah, Działdowo. And there we were, of course—what for did we need to take anything? They took everything away.

CE: They took everything you had? So it didn't matter what you had?

SZ: No, only what you were wearing—and then what you were wearing, 'cause jewelry, that you can forget. They didn't—

CE: Did you have anything hidden on you?

SZ: Yeah, but they took everything away, because—you know, just the clothes you were wearing are the—you know, (inaudible) nothing with the nothing. So we were all together and it was okay. But then later, you know, we came in there, a lot of people were sick because they didn't give you so much to food and everything, but they were telling us we're going to go someplace else and be better, you know.

CE: Yeah. So when you're in Działdowo—

SZ: Yeah, I think five to six months, something like—

CE: Five to six months you were there?

SZ: Yeah.

CE: And what was that like? What was the place like you were in?

SZ: It was just like, you know, like anything, like a farm or something, like I said, not big. And over there, of course, you work for them because they had, like, barns or garage—you know, to go out in the farms and work and all those things.

CE: Did you all work together, your whole family?

SZ: Everybody went, not just—the whole city, you know, there was nothing left at home. And so they all went and they tried to work, and you got very little thing. I never forget my mother hiding the bread here to give it to the kids, and she really (inaudible). That's why I said I get mad because they abused the kids, see. And in there—from there, there was from a train there in Działdowo.

CE: A train, okay.

SZ: Yeah, and the train took us to Częstochowa.

CE: Okay, and that's spelled C-h-e-s-t-o-c-h-o-w-a, right?

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Okay, so you got on a train.

SZ: Yeah, all of us.

CE: Did they just kind of put you all on a train together?

SZ: All of them, like sardines. Yeah, from there we went to closed trains, you know, we went—

CE: You were in the closed—

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Were you in the closed train in the beginning?

SZ: Yeah, from there to Częstochowa.

CE: Okay, okay.

SZ: We went in the train. And from the train, you know, everybody was together.

CE: Were you real crowded in the train?

SZ: Always.

CE: And you were standing?

SZ: Yeah. Well, there was no place to sit. There was no—

CE: So it's more like a cattle car kind of thing?

SZ: Yeah, yeah, something like that; you know, they just took. From there we went to Częstochowa, and at Częstochowa we came in the—you know, there was a big, big—supposed to be a synagogue, but there was no roof. And that's where we were on the thing.

CE: So you were staying in a place with no roof?

SZ: Most of us. In fact my brother Teddy went away to the partisan, got pneumonia, and was in the hospital. But at that time when we came in, the ones who lived in

Częstochowa, the Jews, was still in their own home and everything. So we went cleaning, doing all kinds of stuff, and they helped out a little.

CE: They did? Did they bring—were they able to give you food?

SZ: Very little, because they themselves didn't have, but they helped out. And everybody from us went—my father, everybody was working for them, you know, and doing for the Germans anything you could so you shouldn't starve. And so—

CE: Did the Germans give you food?

SZ: Yes, they gave. But you know, you were standing in the line, and the food wasn't nothing.

CE: What was it?

SZ: Like, you know, raw potatoes, cooked into like big, big barrels, what they cook the big kettles with the soups. But whatever they couldn't use, they gave to people like us. But you thank God for having that little dried out bread or anything, 'cause you didn't have (inaudible). But see, so long as there wasn't a ghetto, they were helping out, yet, you know.

CE: So there wasn't a ghetto?

SZ: No, the people were still living, when we came in—not just from there, from other cities, too, to Częstochowa; it was a bigger city—you know, in the home. The ghetto started in the beginning of forty-two [1942]. And so, of course, from one place they transported, took to the other.

CE: So in 1942, all the other Jews in that town ended up in the ghetto?

SZ: Yeah, had to be in the ghetto. And of course at that time—

CE: And are you still in the synagogue? Are you still living in the synagogue?

SZ: Yeah, but you see what it was, when we were living in the synagogue, [in the] outskirt in Czestochowa, they were starting to build the HASAG.

CE: The concentration camp?

SZ: Camp. But they told us different. “You see that burned out thing, this and that? It’s not good. The quicker you finish that, you have your own homes.” That’s what they told.

CE: Oh, so the quicker you finished HASAG, then you—

SZ: Everybody will have, you know, this. But of course, by the end of forty-two [1942], we were sent to the concentration camp.

CE: So that was right there?

SZ: Yeah, there was putting one left, whoever could go. And the one too young—like my three little sisters, they were too young, and the others, so they went. You see, what happened, I know exactly when they went to Treblinka, because at that time wasn’t big enough Auschwitz: there was no Auschwitz, it was Treblinka. But I know why because I had people, you know, who were there and saw it. So they told us, because they were working there when they went, because we were already going to the concentration camps, so I wasn’t there. But the others who helped out and worked—and of course the rabbi, where I showed you the picture, he was why I know exactly when they went. It was Yom Kippur. And the Germans came in and said to the rabbi and to everybody that they have to go to work. “I don’t care if it’s Yom Kippur.” The rabbi said, “You can take them and tell them, but I’m not telling them to go.” You know, they were religious and everything. Well, the next day, they took them to Treblinka.

CE: So three of your siblings went to Treblinka?

SZ: Three, and of course my mother and my father.

CE: They went to Treblinka, too?

SZ: Oh, yeah. Well, they went with them; see, they wouldn't give up kids. And my mother was younger than my father, but they went, and of course most of them went. Whoever could was in the concentration camps; you see, we weren't there when they went.

CE: So your mother and your father and three siblings went to Treblinka?

SZ: Yeah.

CE: And your mother and father volunteered to go with the kids 'cause they didn't want  
—

SZ: Because you see, the thing is my grandmothers, both of them, and us, we had in forty-one [1941], around June, July, typhoid. I had it; my brother had it, and everybody. The medicine there wasn't, but you had high fever. Thank God we lived through. In forty-one [1941], no medicine and everything. But my grandparents died.

CE: Oh, they did? They died in this town? In—

SZ: In Częstochowa, in the hospital from the typhoid. Otherwise, they would have gone to the—my mother and father and the kids lived through. We lived through, can you imagine? And a lot of them lived, 'cause they had some that went at that time to the gas chambers, to Treblinka. In fact we went—the whole city, whoever lived through, and us, we donated money. We built up a memorial in Treblinka. So we went with the kids to show them and everything.

CE: Good, good. You did? Okay.

SZ: Yeah.

CE: But at this time, you have no idea where they're going? They're just leaving?

SZ: No. Later I found out because I was already with my brother and Chaya, and we went to the HASAG, to the—you know.



CE: So now—so you and three of your siblings go to the concentration camp?

SZ: No, me and my brother, the twin.

CE: Just you and your brother?

SZ: He was in the back.

CE: The other one was out in the woods, the partisan?

SZ: That was before, way before. He was at the—you know, I didn't know, but when he had pneumonia and he got a little better, he and a few others sneaked out, 'cause you had to, and he went to the woods and he found the other people. And he was—if you saw the Treblinka—I mean the underground—you knew. They did a lot of things (inaudible), and now he was gone. But my little sisters, you know, the three—and Chaya, of course, later went with me and everything. So they were—a lot of friends in close families and first cousins and everything went to Treblinka: the ones who went to the concentration camp, of course, died out and everything. That's what we were there the whole time working in the fields, or in the—making bullets in the factory.

CE: Okay, so while you're in HASAG—so you move into HASAG. And what is that—do you remember that day you went to HASAG?

SZ: Yeah, sure. It was around November, December we went in, because the end of the month—end of the year of forty-two [1942], because they went away.

CE: Okay, now what was that camp like?

SZ: Well, it was just like any other, just made, you know, from nothing—

CE: So it was worse than what you had been in before? No?

SZ: It was. Sure it was, because first of all you had to be like, match—you know, the beds, and the one on top of the other. And then getting up early, four or five, whenever

they wanted to go to the factory; or otherwise we work the fields, and in the fields we did to bring the food for them.

CE: Okay, okay, okay.

SZ: So that's where we worked, in fact. You see, that's why I got sick, and it makes me guilty. Because the whole time, friends would lay with me, and all of them—you had to make a certain amount, you know, the bullets. They were helping out for my sister Chaya the whole time, and I did and everything, because she was young and she couldn't do it so much. Then she wasn't feeling good, see. But that's what happened: everybody helped out.

CE: So you were making bullets? What did you actually do?

SZ: The bullets—you see, they give you powder, you know?

CE: Powder.

SZ: Yeah, and there's a factory what you could makes the bullets, you see. And you had to fill the powder, fill the powder—you know, make bullets.

CE: So you were putting the powder in the bullets?

SZ: Yeah, making those bullets, and making the shape from the bullet and put it down in one place in the maker and try to make it as much as you can, otherwise they didn't like it, and put the powder in. Otherwise, you couldn't—

CE: So you had to do so much—

SZ: It was a factory of ammunition.

CE: Yes, okay. And your sister wasn't doing enough?

SZ: She was doing the whole time. You see, three months before, she couldn't; she was a little sick and this and that. Going through (inaudible) lived through. In three months before they took it away, they killed her.

CE: Can you talk about that?

SZ: No.

CE: Or would you prefer not to?

SZ: Oh, yeah. I mean, I always—but I felt guilty because they took her away and I lived, three months before. Even my brother found out from other people that they took her away, because he knew he wasn't behind, you know, (inaudible). The thing is, we tried, all the friends, to do everything with the helping out, doing double the work, and we couldn't. And everything—you know, that's why I'm saying a person so strong that I couldn't do it now, even if I was young. The things that we did were—you wanted to live, you wanted to do it, you do it. But first you didn't know that nobody's alive or anything, but you tried forever, you could. And her, I was happy because we was here from the (inaudible) that the war will be finished, and it could have been. But made us sick, and at that time I got sick. The Russians—you know, Stalin was right across, let's say like here and Clearwater.

CE: Yeah, yeah, that close.

SZ: That close. You heard about the Warsaw Uprising, right? From the ghettos, (inaudible) send them away. They could have—if he would have finished—he was sitting more than six months—she would have been alive.

CE: Wow! So, did you see a lot of people killed while you were in?

SZ: You couldn't help it. If somebody died we had to, you know, put them in the thing.

CE: So you had to carry—

SZ: Of course, that was—even in Działdowo, there was something they put in, like chlorine and everything, in big holes and put them in, you know. And how many died

like this? That was nothing at that time. It's normal. Whoever was in a concentration camp saw plenty of that. That you couldn't help. But the worst thing was I felt guilty I didn't do enough or watching out for her, you know.

CE: But it sounds like you did every single thing you could?

SZ: We did, but, you see, they killed three months before. Then, of course, we were freed in Częstochowa in January 27. I'll never forget the Russians came in. You know about the Russians? That time, then afterwards we heard Stalin decided to (inaudible).

CE: Let's go back just for a moment to the concentration camp. So, tell me what a day would be like. You'd get up at four o'clock, and what would happen?

SZ: Yeah, well, most of them didn't. They gave you something to eat, like a piece of dried bread or anything. We didn't have coffee or any kind of thing like that. But then all of—they would—see, you had to work twenty-four hours, it wasn't like during the day, because all of them couldn't go in at once. So they took a group over there to work. You work for hours over there, and then, you know, you come back. And some days, the other group could be going to the farms—not in the winter, because you couldn't do nothing with the snow. But otherwise they were—all the fruits, all the vegetables, all the things, the same people picked it. So, that was the life for the whole time from—

CE: Did you get any food while you were out working?

SZ: Well, you could, but you had to hide; otherwise, you know.

CE: So you would get it out on the farm?

SZ: And another thing—yeah, I even told my little sister, “Don't touch nothing,” and everything—to watch, because otherwise, you know, those young—those punks, the Germans, they were bad. So we had to watch not to—it wasn't work to get her—plenty of them tried. So you just—

CE: So you were picking food, but you couldn't eat it.

SZ: Yeah, you see, looking at—

CE: Oh, that must have been hard.

SZ: Yeah, very hard. But you get used to it, you know.

CE: Do you get used to it?

SZ: Yes, you get used to it, to know, to look away and everything, because your body feels like—you have to fight. Maybe it's—you know, they were saying, even the ones who come in, a lot of Polacks, the war is going to finish and this and that. So you wanted to live through and see everybody.

CE: Did you feel hungry?

SZ: After a while, you don't.

CE: You don't?

SZ: A person can go for weeks without. When you come in, you know, when we came from Częstochowa into the concentration camp, took a while. They didn't give you, and they waste food and they do something and clean up. You'd be surprised how many times you can go without. Even after the war, 'cause when the Russians freed us they didn't have it themselves so much. But there were a lot of Jewish boys, and they tried to give you something. Like, they were giving caviar: we couldn't eat it because we throw up.

CE: Did you get real skinny? Were you real thin?

SZ: Well, sure, everybody was like skeletons.

CE: Do you think if your sister had had more food, she would have been able to survive?

SZ: Maybe. But you see, she went to (inaudible) undernourished, and she was young and this could be. But the moment she couldn't—they watched, those punks, and everything, took her. Maybe. I don't know.

CE: So the day they took her away, did you know what was going to happen?

SZ: Oh, sure. Outside the other people, you know, they were burying and everything. Not me, you know, (inaudible). Everybody knew, and there's nothing you can—that finished me. I was after that sick.

CE: That finished you?

SZ: It's a good thing the war finished quick, like I said, three months later in January.

CE: Did you feel like giving up at that moment?

SZ: Plenty of—

CE: Was it plenty of times, you felt like giving up?

SZ: A lot of people did, couldn't go on and everything. But, you see, you did. You were fighting and thinking, "Oh, we going to fight and everything, and then we'll be okay."

CE: Yeah. So you didn't give up hope?

SZ: (inaudible), but we didn't know. I could see when my parents went and I didn't know; but later when the others, you know, worked and helped them—put on the train, put away and everything. So they came to the concentration camp later and they told us that they took them. Otherwise, we were already in there.

CE: Is there anything else about that time in the concentration camp that you want to talk about?

SZ: Well, you didn't have—like I said, that life was never could imagine, and you can't even think about it. And then every day, you know, those punks, how many did they beat and how many did they this? You didn't have the clothes to wear or this to wear, the coat; you were going around the winter. Shoes? (laughs) Barefoot in winter.

CE: Were you barefoot at time?

SZ: Plenty of time, because you outgrow. And then later you got from the wood made from the, you know—

CE: Shoes made of wood?

SZ: You know who donated all this? Scandinavian countries.

CE: Did they?

SZ: They were different, better than anyone to the Jews. They couldn't—whoever they could—we had some in the concentration camp. You know, they couldn't help themselves; they sent them—you know, they were away. But the moment the war was over, they went home and they had everything back.

CE: Did you have friends in the concentration camp?

SZ: Oh, sure. A lot of them went—of course, that's why I said if you ever go to Israel—from all the people, all of them who were in concentration camp, a lot of them went to Israel, see. And Israel they're building up. Oh, sure, I have the pictures and everything.

CE: Were you ever able—I don't even know how to say it—to enjoy yourself, or to have fun?

SZ: Not at that time. After a while you wanted to do for the kids, for this and that, but that was later.

CE: Yeah, but not during the concentration camp?

SZ: No, not during the camp. (laughs) Nobody could do it in our—you were just afraid that today you live and who knows what's going to be any second.

CE: So that's mainly what you thought about?

SZ: Yeah, to fight and live through that. That's all.

CE: Did you ever get beaten in the camp?

SZ: Oh, a few. When they saw—you try not to do the wrong thing but tried, you know, to help out. And once the punks (inaudible), they beat you up because you shouldn't do it. She has to do everything on her own. Because a lot—

CE: So when you were helping your sister?

SZ: Yeah, and a lot of times, whenever they couldn't see, somebody else will do it—not so much me, because me, they watched.

CE: Oh, because they knew you were going to help her?

SZ: Yeah, she was little. But I had very, very good friends after the war. We all together and everything, whoever lived through, 'cause most of them, you know, died out, you see.

CE: Do you have any ideas about why you survived?

SZ: Well, no. Because it's a miracle, that's why, I said. A lot of time [they] killed everyone and a lot of them died, and I survived. I don't know if God was—we didn't believe right after the war anymore, but when I had kids I wanted to teach them something. So I said it's not fair but brought up, and this and that, so that's why. But to go through like this, especially when you come home [and] nobody alive—what made you sick is, like I said, my mother had five sisters. And the one in Łódź with the big factory (inaudible) and everything and had nine kids and others, and nobody's alive.



CE: So now, let's talk about the day of liberation.

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Did you know it was coming?

SZ: Well, they were talking about it and we saw—see, the Russians—the Germans, you know, if you heard—killing them like flies. Some Russians were in concentration camps, too, all over, everyone you want to mention. Even where Henry was, they were killing them like flies, worse than the Jews. So the Russians freed us, and whenever they saw them killing them out, and they had the right to. So they were saying—I'll never forget it. They came in—they themselves didn't have much, but they gave to us; and the skeletons and a lot of them dead, so they were helping bury and putting away. And of course, they got rid of, you know, Auschwitz, and Treblinka and everything, which they were in the trains right away. I wish you would have—it's an old thing. (inaudible) the bombing and there would have been so many people alive, but they didn't.

CE: So what happened that day? Take me through that day.

SZ: Well, whenever we were freed, with everybody could—like I said, they were helping out and everything. So we all went to group. Depends. Some went, like I said, where they belong—you know, like the Scandinavian ones. Went to Poland, one went to—we went—I went with—I found out my brother was there, so he came to me and other friends from the city, so we went home.

CE: You went home to your city?

SZ: To Bodzanów. Yeah, but we found out just our friends are alive. And we went in—the house was there; of course, the Polacks were living. And then we went there—

CE: There were Polish people living in your house?

SZ: In the house. But we threw them out and everything and we stayed there.

CE: Was it hard to get rid of them?

SZ: Sure it was, but they went. They knew because it was from the other—what they knew hundreds of years ago, the grandmother knew. Anyway, so we went there. But the only thing that was bad: we were starving during the war; well, we were starving after the war. Because when we came home, there was nothing to eat, nothing to—and we didn't have anything and we didn't have any clothes, you know, what we do. And of course we had lice. Who didn't? Everybody had. So the first thing we did is that shave your head, that's what—even the men—

CE: They shaved your head.

SZ: And tried to go to the farms or here to give you some food.

CE: Okay. Let's stop here because they have to change the tape, and then I will pick back up here.

SZ: Oh, okay.

CE: Okay.

SZ: But it's true, the thing is—

CE: Wait till he puts the tape on, because I don't want to lose anything.

SZ: No, no.

CE: You are such a good storyteller.

SZ: No, I'm not.

***Part 2 ends; part 3 begins***

CE: This is tape two with Sylvia Zyndorf. So you were talking about going back to your house.

SZ: Yeah, we came into the house. And of course a cousin came there and others, whoever lived through—

CE: And you're with your brother now?

SZ: Oh, yeah, my brother. Yeah, my twin brother.

CE: Your twin brother.

SZ: (inaudible)

CE: But do you know at this point that the rest of your family has died?

SZ: Well, the ones who came back from concentration camp, some—the boys especially, they were helping, you know, the burying and everything. And they were the ones who told us that they took them to Treblinka because (inaudible). That's why I light candles, you know. They have to know that's when they went to the gas chamber. The group, what we knew, so that's where we found out. So the ones who lived through came back to home, to check to see who was alive. Because my brother from the—you know, who was in the—you know, the older one who was on the farm, you know on the—Teddy didn't come back till later, when we were in Germany. So just me and my—

CE: So you didn't know he was alive?

SZ: No, because he was in the partisan and he didn't come back with the group yet; he was gone. And me and my brother, and of course friends and everything, and somebody [with whom] I was going to school.

CE: You were going to school?

SZ: No, not then. Before the war.

CE: Oh, people that you knew before the war?

SZ: Yeah, before the war. So they—some who lived through came. In fact, they came back, you know, some what were in Russia. Like I said, I had two cousins and a friend, and then about three of them came back—in fact, the ones who made the pictures. He was a real good photographer and he worked, and that's how he made a living, you know, in Russia. So we were there, but most of us had to go out and beg and this, and saw nobody's alive. And then all of a sudden—

CE: Did you go beg from people you knew?

SZ: Yeah. Well, the ones—some what we knew and everything back, but it was no good. All of a sudden they came, from the Jewish center. They sent the group and they said, "Whoever is under eighteen"—you know like us—"in a group, they will send you to the children's home." There was a note for (inaudible) to get to Warsaw, and in there we have clothes, food, everything. But so we went there, and of course—

CE: You and your brother went there?

SZ: Oh, yeah. Not just there—a lot of them went to, you know, Israel—but we went— whoever was there and freed. Not just from Bodzanów, from around Warsaw, from all over. We went to Otwock, to that children's home. When we were there, a lot of them were sick, like even me. I couldn't because of my sister, you know, I just—

CE: So you were upset?

SZ: Depressed, depressed and sick. I had ulcerative colitis and everything from them. And now, so we were there to get clothes and food, but see, they were sending it from Canada, supposed to be in from America. Food and clothes disappeared; it didn't come to us.

CE: What happened to it, do you know?

SZ: They were stealing it on the way. They said it. It's no good. So they were telling all our friends and everything, "The best thing would be for you, all of you, if you would go to Germany," because Germany had to give everybody and give food and everything, and at least you had enough food and a home. So the thing is, you had to have money to go through, from Poland to Czechoslovakia, the border—illegally, you know—and pay them

off here and there. So that's how I, with the group, find out who's going which kibbutz. So we went into Kraków. There was a kibbutz.

CE: So you went to Kraków? So how did you finance that?

SZ: We didn't. We illegally went in the train, however you could, walked a little, do a little. We didn't have money; nobody had anything. So then we finally came, a group from all over. Some went—you know, went in the trains so nobody should see who they was and everything, because you didn't have the money; that's why it was bad. So finally we went into Kraków, but Kraków was the kibbutz who has sent just away people to Germany. So we had to wait around, you know, there; but at least they had some food.

CE: Okay, so they had just sent some people to Germany?

SZ: Yes, a group, you know. So we waited six months till they got enough money from all over—from United States, from other places—to get the kibbutz full, so they can pay off and bring the group into Germany.

CE: Okay, so you were there for six months. And what was it like being there?

SZ: There it wasn't bad, because at least you had food; you know, they took care of you if you got sick or anything you was—you know, whatever they could.

CE: And what—did you have to work?

SZ: No, you didn't have to work. The only thing that was bad: at night or whatever, you had to hide; you couldn't go out because the Polack weren't good. In fact—I don't know if you read it—in Kraków they got together a bunch and killed plenty of them on the border. But the Russians later—we found they killed him. So then they was better.

CE: So who was doing the killing? Who was killing the Jews at that point?

SZ: The Polacks, those ones who didn't like why the Jews are alive. Some were left, and the whole kibbutz was Jewish. In fact—you won't believe it. See, some people don't know, but a lot of the nuns, when we were already in the children's home, went out and brought back orphaned Jewish kids. But they were hiding, and they didn't tell the priests

or the thing because they were afraid. They were hiding a few kids, too, and they brought them back because the parents brought them in.

CE: Okay, okay.

SZ: And they didn't even have any hair or anything because, you know, they were hiding, where nobody should see.

CE: So the nuns had hidden a lot of children.

SZ: A few, and some Polish, you know. And then, of course, the Jews found out—even Israel, but there was no Israel, so they said let them save the kids and being here and there. When they became Israel they took them to Israel, a lot of orphans, and they saved them. And we were there doing whatever we could, you know, we were teaching [the kids] to read a little, to do a little, because most of the kids, even younger, couldn't read, couldn't write.

CE: And who was teaching this?

SZ: The older ones.

CE: The older ones, okay.

SZ: Yeah, you know. And a lot of them came back from Russia because went there, too, you know, to be in charge in the kibbutz of saving and doing everything for the kids because most of them—where the kids lived through, the parents weren't alive, you know. Most of them went to the gas chambers, you see. When you tell people, they say, "Oh, couldn't—" What happened? Over six million Jews, you know, in the—and you know over 3,000 were Polish Jews—over three million.

CE: Three million, yeah.

SZ: Yeah, over three million.

CE: Almost three million, yes.

SZ: Yeah, were from Poland.

CE: That's amazing, isn't it?

SZ: Yeah. But that's why it's a miracle. But anyhow, after we were for a while, you know, in the six months they had enough money, so we went with the train to Czechoslovakia and they paid them off and they let the train go, you know, we came on the train. So we came into Germany to Leipheim, you know, that—

CE: Leipheim.

SZ: Yeah. And when we came into Leipheim, the group, you know, that was in Germany also—but it was free, you know. The *Hälftlinge*, you could live there, stay there and everything. But I had a cousin who was, you know, in the concentration camp someplace else. But anyhow, every place he went from the same city (inaudible) he looked for—because we were the only twins, you know, in the city and that was easier to do it, to write and to find out if anybody's alive.

CE: So your brother's still with you?

SZ: Oh, yeah, the whole time till—he was always, since we lived through it. So then the group—now from there, we all went, like I said, to Leipheim. And there we had enough food, enough everything, but you couldn't. So my cousin looked and found out that we are the only twins alive. So he was where Henry was, in that (inaudible) castle what they took over, that's how I came to.

CE: In the castle?

SZ: In the castle.

CE: Okay, so you went there to be with him?

SZ: No. So he came to take us, me and my brother, of course—not the group, and whoever wanted because they let that kibbutz being bigger. And later, when they came

Israel, they couldn't go there. So he was—you know, to take us and do it, and that's how we came to go to there, in Bamberg, not far—the castle. And that's where—

CE: And that's where you met your husband?

SZ: Yes.

CE: Now, I don't want you to tell me that story yet, because the two of you are going to tell us that story together. But let's just see if there's any other things that you want to talk about before your husband joins you?

SZ: Well, I mean, after that, you know, like I said, I was after my sister sick. I was in the hospital and everything, but at that time there wasn't any penicillin—it wasn't here either—or many medicines or you tried yourself. But everybody talking, “At least you're alive and you can bring families,” and my brother, you know and everything. I had—they just tried to build me up, you know. But we had nothing, no money, no noth—everything from where, from nothing. So it was very, very hard to live through when you had no home and nobody alive, nobody to do it, you didn't know what. The only thing they were talking is the ones who came. You know, it was not easy to leave. (inaudible) we can move there. And there you build up, you do everything.

CE: What impact do you think this whole experience has had on who you became?

SZ: A lot. All my life I can't forget, and it's a miracle that a person can stand it. I don't think I could now, I couldn't. I lived through, and to go through, it's like not real. You know, like it's a dream and everything. But you still lost everybody and did everything and had nothing, and you had to scrape and do and save. And you know, one thing that's good, that my grandmother and my mother taught the kids the moment they got born how to live and what to do in life, otherwise—see, to do the—first of all, not just that. Anyplace you went, to do—not just sit and wait until they serve you or give you, but do whatever you can to help out, to help everybody. That's how I did, even with my little sister or my brother or anybody. That's what it is. But I didn't know anybody's alive, because they weren't.

CE: Do you talk about this very often?



SZ: No, seldom. But like I say, Shoah, and sometimes the kids like Haley, every time. See this paper what he gave? She has a copy; she had to write this and that. If you get to know her, she's—

CE: I'd love to see her. Does she know you're being interviewed now?

SZ: She heard something, but she said she wants a—of course, when you get one she will make a copy. And she will go a few time to the Holocaust [Museum], you know, to visit and they were all in the Washington, too. You know, stuff like that. And of course she is too young, but my other ones went to Israel on—you know Birthright, you heard about it? He is billionaire, but he said he donates the money so all the kids should see what happened to Israel. So whenever—they have to be seventeen, eighteen to go, till they're twenty-six. So the two of them, Kelsey and Derek—she wanted to go, but she's not old enough. But she said maybe she will go the March of Living.

CE: Oh, wonderful.

SZ: The March of Living is—(inaudible) and I know a lot of my cousins went. They go first to Poland and all over to the concentration camps, and then to Israel.

CE: Would you like to talk about it more, or is it—?

SZ: Well, sometimes it's very depressing, and sometimes—you know, it's good that the kids should know. Everybody should know, because one thing that should never, never happen—and the one thing I said to the kids if they never live there, never go there, to Israel. If there was an Israel they would be alive now, a lot of people, because I know no matter how bad it was, I had two cousins who went away just before the war started, to Israel, and the parents took their death. They didn't want to know. They were alive and they had kids and they had this. See, that's what. And I know one thing, my daughter ever—they were law firm, a big one. Every time they turned around, whenever they collected and they always needed, you know, to Israel or the kids. Even Haley, the little one, (inaudible), she always collects and gives it.

CE: So is there anything else you want to say before your husband joins us?

SZ: No, I don't think anything.

CE: Okay. Well, you've done a wonderful job of telling your story.

SZ: Well, it's easy, because it's the truth and it's terrible.

CE: Yes.

SZ: Nothing you can do. Wish we could. Can't turn back.

CE: I know.

SZ: See, the thing is I read books. I like to read and all this.

CE: Do you?

SZ: Yeah. Even Herta [Pila] gave me like a set, Kristallnacht and (inaudible) and this and that. I said to her—and I knew from before, they could have ran away, and they did and came back, a lot of people. Even my parents, right across the bridge and everything. Nobody believed it, you know why? 'Cause they thought World War I wasn't so bad with Germans. They couldn't do it and everything. Of course came in Hitler and everything. And anytime, I can tell you, one thing it gets bad, they blame the Jews. Why? What they—in fact, even Poland when we were talking with a lot of Polish, they said—and the Jews were there and everything; the economy was good and everything; they were building up and all over. I even read it when I was here in the United States when the Jews came in New York and all over. See, they don't appreciate them.

CE: Do you ever feel anti-Semitism here?

SZ: Some, but you try to teach them and everything, like I said, not to even the kids. I don't care if you are anything; the worst thing is if you start hating here or there or anything. (inaudible) lives across, you know, she's a professor; and my daughter, like I said, has a big law firm. She is a lawyer. Who cares so long as they are nice people and they're educated and everything? It doesn't matter if you black, white or Catholic, Jewish; it doesn't matter. It's the person, what you do. But if you start hating and teaching the kids that, never. Even, like I said—I think I told you that my son, we lived in a house. Next door the boy was taught from the mother to hate because she was a Polish, but the husband was making most of the money with the Jews. So she started, so

he told her off and they started apologizing, this and that. You don't teach the kids, because kids pick up bad things.

CE: So, your message is really to teach.

SZ: Yeah. To teach, not to hate and not to do it. And you know what else? Maybe it's us brought up or anything. I hate it; it makes me sick when I see little kids abused. Kids especially, because most of the kids went to the gas chambers. And here they were lucky to have kids. What they doing? Abuse them.

CE: Yes. Well, thank you very much for telling your story.

SZ: No, it's the truth, I see it and everything. They shouldn't do it, 'cause they should appreciate what they have and not hate, and then that doesn't matter. We have here neighbors, you go talk to them. You see anyone, they very happy that we live here and everything.

CE: Wonderful, thank you very much.

SZ: You're welcome now.

CE: Okay.

***Part 3 ends; part 4 begins***

CE: This is tape three, and we're here with Mr. and Mrs. Zyndorf. And what we would like is for both of you to tell us about when you met. Mr. Zyndorf, do you want to start?

HZ: Yes. It was in 1946.

CE: Okay, and where were you?

HZ: It was in Asperg, outside Bamberg area; it's in Bavaria.

CE: Okay, and what were you doing there?

HZ: No, we were on a kibbutz.

SZ: You were.

HZ: Yeah. I was in the kibbutz, she came a little later.

CE: Okay, so you were in the kibbutz after the war?

HZ: Right after the war we created a kibbutz. This was like a *schloss*, like a—

SZ: Castle.

HZ: A castle. What was—what is—?

SZ: Baron—

HZ: Baron (inaudible).

SZ: Yeah.

CP: It was a German castle, is that right?

HZ: Right, a German castle; but, you see, he was in France. He was in a camp—I mean, after the war they put him in a camp. And the castle was empty so they gave it—the Americans gave it to us to occupy it. We had a group of people that we started off with about fifteen, and then all of a sudden we got almost eighty people.

CE: Wow. And what were your—what did you do during the day then?

HZ: Nothing. We just—we had over there horses, we had cows, we had everything over there; and we had a big orchard with fruits and everything else. And even—we used—they used to raise fish over there, too, carps. So we had everything there.

CE: Okay, and how old were you at that point?

HZ: At this point I was—and this was 1946—about twenty-one years old.

SZ: No, not yet.

HZ: No, that's what I was—

SZ: Twenty-one when you came to the United—

HZ: Not quite twenty-six.

CE: Okay. All right. And Mrs. Zyndorf, how did you get to—

SZ: Well, like I said, I came into the kibbutz through Leipheim, Germany. And in Leipheim, my cousin Herschel, he was with him in kibbutz and they lived there in the castle. So he was looking for, you know, family and everything; he found the twins, me and my brother. So he came and took us over there, me and my brother. Of course other—whoever wanted, that's where they headed. And over there it was good because I was sick, because [I was] depressed from my sister, so I needed medicine and I need this. And he was already known, so he could get medicine illegally, right? All kinds, and even in the hospital—

HZ: In Schlüsselfeld.

SZ: Yeah, and all over, and he helped me. And then, you know, I was there, and of course at that time there was no, like, love and everything. He didn't have anybody; I didn't have anybody, except my brother. So then, you know, we—at the end of forty-six [1946] we got married.

CE: Okay. So now I want to hear—do you remember first meeting her, Mr. Zyndorf?

HZ: Oh, yes, when she came to the kibbutz, because I was in charge of everything then.

CE: You were? Okay.

SZ: He and a friend. They were running it and collecting—they going into Bamberg, remember, to collect a lot of food?

HZ: This is just outside Bamberg.

CE: So you knew how to get illegal drugs and things?

HZ: Right, right.

CE: Pharmaceuticals and stuff like that?

HZ: Sure.

SZ: And he got to know the mayor of the (inaudible).

HZ: And she was in hospital, also in Bamberg.

CE: Okay, and so were you taken with her when you first met her?

HZ: From the beginning, yeah, sure. But we got close because everybody was close to each other then.

SZ: Yeah, I was sleeping in a room with another friend; she went to Israel.

HZ: She's in Israel.

SZ: And the friend had a boyfriend who was best friends with him; later they got married.

HZ: Yeah, Schleman.

SZ: So, you know.

HZ: They live in Netanyah.

CE: So did you start dating? Does that—

SZ: No.

HZ: There was not such a thing. But like I say, we were there all together, and we just got together.

CE: So you would spend time together?

HZ: Right.

SZ: Yeah.

HZ: That's all we had to do.

SZ: We got married Orthodox.

HZ: Food, there was enough food from everything we got. We had like orchards, we had cows, we had this.

SZ: Yeah, but not just that. You see, we were busy to, you know, sell most of it, whatever you could from the kibbutz, from the castle, to get money and send to Israel or here to buy (inaudible). You remember, beautiful—

HZ: We even got some (inaudible) and send them to Israel, from the Germans.

CE: Wow.

SZ: Sold everything you could, selling everything. Whatever we couldn't sell, we chopped up. We didn't leave nothing when he came over, even beautiful furniture and everything.

HZ: And the pianos.

SZ: Remember?

HZ: All destroyed.

SZ: Because when he came back, he made us all go. After a while, but a lot of them went to the—

CP: Oh, when the estate owner came back?

HZ: Yes, he came back from—

SZ: They let him out from—

HZ: From jail in France.

CE: Okay.

CP: And so he came back and there was 100 people living in his estate?

SZ: More, more.

CP: More than 100 people?



HZ: More than this, but the people left already because we knew already we were going to have to leave it. So we went to Bamberg.

SZ: But a lot of them went to Israel illegally. Believe me, they went through sea—if you ever watched, and that's no story—

HZ: *Exodus* [the 1960 film].

SZ: *Exodus*. That's more than true.

HZ: See, our friends—

SZ: A lot of our friends from that kibbutz went. In fact, they got married and she went first; when he came she was there.

HZ: She was already there. (inaudible), you heard about it?

SZ: Yeah. And she's from Israel, and (inaudible) a lot of it—

HZ: They were slaughtered by the Arabs.

SZ: We gave everything there. But the thing is when we knew he's going to come back, he didn't deserve anything, destroyed so many Jews. But whatever that could be sold, paintings, anything that you want to mention—

HZ: When we went to Bamberg.

SZ: We made money and send everything. Israel needed it.

HZ: In Bamberg we went into the city hall, so they gave us food stamps and some money, the Germans, already. This was after the war.

CE: Okay.

HZ: And the one from the—

SZ: The mayor.

HZ: —from the city hall, the mayor—the mayor was not too bad because the actual mayor what was there at the end of the war wasn't there anymore, because they got rid of him because he was a Nazi.

SZ: The Gestapo.

HZ: But the new mayor was a lot better, so he helped us to get food stamps and this and that.

CE: Okay. And so how long, then, were you there?

HZ: Oh, we were staying in Bamberg for four years.

CE: Four years. So you got married in Bamberg?

SZ: No, we got married in the castle.

CE: In the—

SZ: By Orthodox Jewish, by (inaudible).

CE: Did you have a ceremony?

SZ: Oh, sure! I have pictures and everything. See that, my cousin came; you know, I showed you.

CE: That's right, you showed it to me.

SZ: He was a good photographer, but in black and white. So he made pictures, he made  
—

HZ: He lived the war in Russia; he was sent to Russia.

SZ: Yeah, he went to Russia.

CE: Were there a number of people who got married, who lived in the kibbutz?

SZ: Yes.

HZ: Oh, yeah.

SZ: A lot of them got married. But listen, we had, like I said, really a big ceremony—you know, outside under *chuppah* and this and all kinds of things, because of the Orthodox. But a lot of them got married—a few of them went, the wife went, we came, it was (inaudible)—

HZ: (inaudible).

SZ: A few of them, who got to know this and that. None of them had anything. So this was—most of the family weren't alive, so why not? So they went.

CP: How did you manage that? From going to a concentration camp to then all of a sudden living in this castle—

HZ: You'd be surprised.

CP: —and married. Were you happy, even though—?

HZ: You'd be surprised how we would live through. Nobody would believe it, what we went through. From nothing, like even right after the war when we were liberated in Dachau—

SZ: Buchenwald.

HZ: In Buchenwald, I mean. So after the war we were right next to Weimar; and after the war we didn't have no clothes, but we got some underwear from the Americans.

SZ: I show the pictures, in the army (inaudible).

HZ: With the underwear we went to Weimar.

SZ: And then you got the army—

HZ: Right, then we got the American army uniform.

CE: Wow!

HZ: Right.

CE: And did you have any clothes at this point?

SZ: No, whatever we could from the Russians; they gave and everything. And of course, you know, like I say—

HZ: Americans had everything.

SZ: Everybody shaved their hair not to get the disease, and they start taking baths and didn't—there were lice.

CE: That must have—do you remember the first bath you got to take after?

SZ: It wasn't a regular bath. Even in the castle you had to go in; you just took a big, you know—

CE: Tub?

SZ: A pot with the bowls, the old fashioned, and washed off, you know.

CE: It still must have felt good.

SZ: Yeah, you said it. With soap and clean, and the beds clean—

HZ: It was a big castle.

SZ: I was teaching my little sister, when in the concentration camp: take off at night the clothes, wash it, hang it up, lay it on the bed, and next day put it on.

CE: Wow!

SZ: You'd be surprised.

HZ: But in Germany when we were in Asperg the *Bürgermeister*, like the mayor, he was very good. He wasn't a Nazi, because in the war the Nazis put him in jail, his whole family. But after the war he became the mayor of Asperg. And he helped us a lot. He was at the wedding; we got the pictures here.

SZ: Yeah, he gave—you know, brought stuff for the food and for this. And besides that, you see, from where do you think the castle—the kibbutz exist? They were going in every day to—or was it once a week?—to Bamberg in the Jewish center, you know, from the United States. And of course, like I told you, just like happen like the children's home, by the time he came it was gone; they stole it. Whoever could, they sold it on the black market.

HZ: Even at the kibbutz over there, the Americans let us have a truck from there, and we had a German driver. The mayor's son was the driver.

SZ: Yeah, to go into there and drive.

CE: So on your wedding day, did you feel like this was starting a new life?

HZ: Oh, yeah, we knew this, but we just didn't know where we going to go.

SZ: Yeah, and what we going to have, what to support, this and that. But when the Baron came back with the castle because he was freed by the Americans, we didn't have to stay in those, you know, those regular concentration camps, what they had in Bamberg. We had a—the Germans gave us a room with the—in there—one room, you know.

CE: But it must have seemed like a castle.

SZ: Yeah, because for us at least you had everything, you didn't—

HZ: You had where to stay.

SZ: You could go to the bathroom and we had where to stay, it was better.

CE: Wow!

HZ: It was on (inaudible).

SZ: Yeah. It wasn't easy because you didn't have anybody; just my brother was with us. But I had—my daughter was born eleven months after we got married—in November, in fact, and we got married in December.

CE: Okay.

SZ: You know. So we didn't have much, and we managed.

CE: So tell me—

SZ: Black market he was doing stuff.

CE: What kind of—

SZ: You know, my—

CE: The black market, yes.

SZ: My brother came back from the partisan and he didn't have any money. We had a cousin—an uncle, actually—in Montreal, so he wanted to leave. So he didn't have any money, he sold some fish on black market. (inaudible) gave him the money.

HZ: Gave more of the money to—

CE: Talk about the black market a little bit, how that worked.

HZ: No, this was all over. But you see, everything was on food stamps, so if you could get something without the stamps, this was the black market.

CE: Yes, okay.

HZ: Nothing—it's not like money, but to just to buy stuff, like for food or for anything else. And then you got the American—not the regular dollars, but you had the—from the army, script dollars.

CE: Yes, okay.

HZ: So that's what we were dealing with.

CE: So how did you figure all that out?

HZ: We did. Don't be—

SZ: You find out from others and then you—

HZ: Yeah, that's right.

SZ: And bring it.

HZ: You feel the—you find out a lot of things.

CE: Because you had a business mind even then, so you could kind of figure it out.

HZ: Yeah, but you had to make a living, you had to live.

CE: Yeah, okay. So you're living in one room and you're doing black market stuff, so it's enough to make something to—

HZ: Yeah, to make something.

CE: And you have food stamps and—

SZ: At that time we had my daughter, but my other—the son was born. They're fourteen months apart, so I had two before we came to the United States.

CE: And you're still in the same room? Still staying in the same room?

SZ: Yes. And that was in Bamberg, remember.

HZ: Yes.

SZ: We didn't have anybody to take care or help or anything like (inaudible).



HZ: We had a friend (inaudible).

SZ: And there was no diapers; you had to wash them, you know, by hand, at that time, and boil the bottles.

CE: Did you have a sink? Or where did you do?

HZ: No, there in Germany you had already—

SZ: Yeah, in Germany we had a sink.

HZ: We had water running.

SZ: Yeah, by her.

HZ: They had (inaudible) and everything already there.

CE: Okay.

HZ: She had a (inaudible) what they were making.

SZ: You know, say like ice cream, cakes—

HZ: Cakes.

SZ: You know, like that. In fact she wanted him because she knew he can do it, to take it over—

HZ: Yeah, she wanted to give the whole thing to stay there.

SZ: —but we didn't want to stay.

CE: Who had this (inaudible)?

SZ: The lady who owned our building.

CE: Okay, okay.

HZ: In the house.

SZ: Yeah.

HZ: She want me to take it over because she was single with a brother—

SZ: Yeah, she and her brother, they didn't have any kids or anything.

CE: And she knew you already knew some about the business, right?

SZ: Oh, yeah.

CE: Yeah.

SZ: So she want, but we didn't want to stay.

HZ: Fräulein Kellner.

SZ: Yeah. We just wanted, you know—we stayed there till end of forty-nine [1949].

HZ: And at this time our daughter was already getting—she was speaking perfect German and everything, and everything she wanted, she got it from her.

SZ: She was nice. But the thing is, I didn't want to stay—

HZ: No, we didn't want to stay.

SZ: —because it reminded myself and everything—we had a lot of friends who stayed but wanted—

HZ: We still have friends in Frankfurt.

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Do you?

SZ: So we filled out papers, you know, to go from Germany to the United States. I had—my grandmother had a brother, and when the brother was a little boy he went to Canada. He was in Montreal and he became a big doctor. So anyhow, he helped out, too, so he sent papers. But we didn't go to Montreal.

HZ: We had a friend over there in Germany. He was the biggest builder in Germany after the war.

SZ: Yeah, but I didn't want to—

HZ: And he died, when, about a year and a half ago.

SZ: And from there, we came to the United States.

HZ: When I came the first time to Munich, he was the head already there from the *shul* and everything. Right away he gave me a (inaudible), and he said, "Sit here and come with us to eat," and everything else.

SZ: No, but we stayed till end of forty-nine [1949] there.

HZ: No, but this was later when we coming back.

SZ: When we came to visit.

CP: So at that time, you had two kids, and your son must have been very young, right?

SZ: Yeah, one was. When we left Germany, she was twenty-two [months] and he was about eight months, nine.

CP: So he was very young. Did you—

SZ: Two!

CP: Then you traveled—

SZ: I got married when I was seventeen and a half.

HP: We traveled, but we had one—her brother, besides our friend, (inaudible) the Nazis . He was always with us.

CP: Oh, he came?

SZ: Friends when he was in concentration camp with him and everything.

HZ: I was with him in concentration camp.

SZ: So we came to Cleveland, and we sent the pay[ment] because to come to the United States somebody had to, you know, pay or sponsor anything, and they did. So they sent for a lot of them. A lot of them came to New York, a lot of—we came to Cleveland.

CP: Did you know that you wanted to go to Cleveland, or was it because that's—whoever was the sponsor?

SZ: No, they recommend—

HZ: They recommended it to you.

SZ: They send it to you and they are probably approved here—

CE: So it was the Jewish center in Cleveland?

HZ: In Cleveland, the Jewish center.

CE: A lot of people have come to this area.

HZ: And you know who was the head over there? It was the Ratners. They were the—the Home Depots, they were in charge.

SZ: Anyhow we came to Cleveland and they found us a home. We paid rent—and everyone was Jewish in this house—for seventy dollars. Now you don't get for seventy dollars.

CE: Wow. So did you have a job when you got here?

SZ: No—

HZ: The first job I got at the Ratners', Forrest City Lumber, like the Home Depot. And there I was making already eighty dollars a week.

SZ: That was a fortune.

HZ: Was a lot of money. And another thing what it was, we got the jobs and the—really, Americans couldn't get no jobs. They came in there to work, so even for a day's work, they had to give them fifty cents for breakfast.

SZ: Yeah, because they didn't have it. At that time it was hard.

HZ: The company gave them fifty cents for breakfast. This was in fifty-one [1951], fifty-two [1952]. It wasn't that good, but we complain here, now.

SZ: Well, now, but at that time nobody had foreclosures like now.

HZ: Right.

SZ: Anyhow, the thing is we were there and, like I said, moved in. Then I took my brother in, of course, till he got married, for five years. So we had the two kids and my brother, and he worked twenty-four hours and I took care. But tried to save up—

HZ: Two jobs.

CE: You had two jobs? What was your other job?

HZ: A friend of mine at Lux Mendel bakery. Lux, he was my friend from Germany. So he says, "Come to work to us in (inaudible) bakery."

CE: Okay.

HZ: This was the second job.

SZ: So he had two jobs. And that's how we saved up the money. And I bought a Frigidaire later, got rid of the icebox, a stove—you know, a little at a time.

HZ: And Saturday night I was supposed to have off, so I went to another bakery to work to make extra twenty dollars.

CE: Did you?

HZ: Oh, yes.

CE: Oh, my!

HZ: Yes, yes.

SZ: Well, at that time, even my brother knew—

HZ: We needed the money.

SZ: Everybody did, which is good. I wish now people should do it, be ambitious like it was before, because it doesn't come easy, no place.

CE: So how long were you in Cleveland?

SZ: Six and a half years.

CE: Six and a half years. And how did you start your own bakery? Talk a little bit about that.

HZ: Well, in Toledo there was a bakery for sale, and the—

SZ: Wait a minute. You have in Cleveland a little bit, a bakery in there.

HZ: I know, but this was not much. But there we had a guy like—he was the head of the union. And so he says, “I got a bakery for you if you want to go there, and you can take it over. Goodman’s Bakery in Toledo.” I says, “Okay, I’m going to go.” And that’s when we bought Goodman’s Bakery.

SZ: It was a dump, in a bad, bad neighborhood.

HZ: It was a very bad neighborhood, and we were afraid to go out at night. But the people what had business, nobody bothered you.

SZ: Even the (inaudible) and the colored, nothing.

HZ: On Canton Avenue.

SZ: So we moved there, and of course—

HZ: And then we started the bakery, and we expanded.

SZ: We didn't have much, but we bought the house, for—I don't know for \$12,000 or something with the kids—

HZ: (inaudible)

SZ: At that time you could buy a lot of things.

HZ: It was a big house.

SZ: Yeah, the old—

HZ: And all of a sudden we were there a few years and we had to move out because everything changed.

SZ: Yeah.

CE: How did it change?

HZ: The neighborhood was a different neighborhood.

SZ: It changed.

HZ: It was getting bad.



SZ: So then we bought another house. He saved—I saved up some money and everything, you know—

HZ: Built another one, on (inaudible).

SZ: Yeah. And then he saved money and bought a lot and they built the bakery in that building in a strip for rent.

HZ: The strip is still there.

SZ: Yeah, still there.

CE: Now, when the two of you—okay, when you're in Cleveland, do you talk about the Holocaust, or is it something—?

HZ: Well, we never talked. In the beginning we didn't want to talk to nobody about it.

CE: Did you talk to each other about it?

HZ: Yeah, but like I say, but we didn't want—because even the people what we worked, like the Ratners, they done a lot for the Israeli and for the Jews. They give us the jobs all the time.

CE: But so you don't talk to anybody about it. And why don't you talk about it?

SZ: Because we know at that time, we were just too—

HZ: Too fresh yet.

SZ: You know, it would be—like I said, I was sick and I had—I wind up in Cleveland Clinic. I had ulcerated colitis from this, because of all finding out with this and that. So even the doctor said don't do it—

CE: Don't talk about it because it might make you sicker, feel worse.

SZ: Yeah, you want to get better. And that's what we did, just, you know, do anything you could. So then later, like I said, when we came into Toledo, there was a lot of Jews and everything, so I start changing and helping the kids to be real Jewish, belonging to synagogues and—

HZ: The Jewish center. We were going all the time.

SZ: Yeah, and the Jewish center and the Hebrew school. They were going to teach them.

HZ: They were walking to school.

SZ: And then on top of that, you know, not just that, I kept a kosher home and everything, this and that, till we came here to live.

CE: So Mr. Zyndorf, did it bother you to talk about it at that point?

HZ: Still you didn't want to bring it up to start over again.

SZ: He was worse.

CE: You just wanted to start over?

HZ: Right.

SZ: Yes.

CE: Yeah.

SZ: And another thing: you see, most of them—he had a lot of friends there in Cleveland [who are] there still, and a lot of them who were together with him in concentration camp and a lot of them who were someplace else, and none of them wanted to remind themselves to it. They wanted to stay away from it.

CE: Yeah, okay.

SZ: After a while everybody was saying, like, “Show them; it’s not good the kids won’t know,” and the kids started to nag you and that.

CE: Did they? Your kids started to—

HZ: Oh, the kids started. “We want to know.”

SZ: They wanted to know the life and they want to know this and that, where everybody—you know, who we had. And of course we took them for the trip, like my daughter and my son.

CE: When did you go on the trip?

SZ: Well, must be—you know, to show her and Louie and Bernice and all of them where it’s born. They must be more than five years—

HZ: No, to go back to Poland?

SZ: Yeah.

HZ: (inaudible)

SZ: We went ourselves a few times, but then later—

HZ: But before, we went once.

SZ: Yeah, we went with them.

CE: But that was while you were in Cleveland that you went back to Poland?

HZ: No.

SZ: No, no.

CE: It's when you were here?

SZ: When we were in Toledo.

CE: Toledo, okay.

HZ: In Toledo. We went—

SZ: We went a few times.

HZ: To Auschwitz. We went all over.

SZ: Yeah, to teach them. They wanted—they nagged and everything, so we figured they are ready. But really, all your life you can't forget, because things like that, to live—you cannot. You just something—you know, you saw it. Asking how many dead did you see? They were dying like flies and lying. They had typhus.

HZ: In Buchenwald you had piles. Right after the war they couldn't get rid of them, they couldn't burn them that fast.

CE: So what was it like to go back to Poland?

HZ: No, I didn't want to—from the beginning I never wanted to go back to Poland. But after so many years I just want to go and see what's—so I went back and I went to Auschwitz, because Auschwitz from us was only thirty kilometer.

CE: Wow, okay.

HZ: And I just want to see. We had a lot of friends that before the war they used to come to our city. The Jews were always getting together.

CP: Was it a difficult trip back? Was it hard on you?

HZ: Oh, yeah, it was very difficult, but you didn't like it.

SZ: Yeah, but you see he was freed by the Americans, so he didn't want to go and he didn't go. I went back right away; we lived there, and then we went to the children's home right away.

HZ: Because right after the war from Buchenwald we had to choose—we could choose to go back to Poland or go here or go there. I said, "I'm not going back to Poland," because I knew nobody was alive.

CE: Is that the reason?

HZ: That's the reason.

CE: Did you worry about the anti-Semitism still?

HZ: You knew—in Poland, you always have anti-Semites. Even today you have the same thing.

SZ: Yeah, but you knew people are talking—

HZ: Right.

SZ: You told them in Krakow when I was waiting to go to Germany they're—how many friends of ours got killed.

HZ: They kill you.

CE: Really? At that point, by the Polish?

HZ: Yeah, and that was a little better.

SZ: After the war, sure.

HZ: The guy who was the head of the government what got killed; he was the best one.

CE: It's hard for me to imagine, like having—it's almost like your country turned against you.

HZ: Right, the whole country.

CE: You know, it's like your home—it's your home and your country and—

SZ: And living and helping them and everything. Because of the Jews being there, it was better for them, wasn't it?

HZ: No, they took everything over.

SZ: They took everything.

HZ: And then when you went back, if you want to go and see something, don't even come to the house.

SZ: No, but what did I tell you? The guy [said] "Oh, his grandfather bought it."

HZ: Yeah, we went into one of the bakeries there. Just our neighbors; we had a bakery and they had a bakery. So I went into the bakery and they were still working there. So I

says, “(inaudible) was here?” “Oh, no, we bought the bakery from them.” How could you buy from him? He’s dead. The whole family is dead.

SZ: But they just lied. The whole houses and everything they took over. Whenever you went, you couldn’t help it. Only ones who got everything back is the Scandinavian countries, whoever was in concentration camp. They were saving and saving a lot of people.

HZ: Right after Buchenwald we had a lot of people that was from Scandinavia—from Sweden, from Denmark. They went right back.

SZ: They got everything back.

HZ: They didn’t have to ask them much.

CE: Wow. Now, how did your children respond to going to Poland?

SZ: Well, they wanted to see. They were depressed, and even Bernice—like, we went to see even the partisan. Of course, I told them my brother was there. They were crying and everything. They didn’t realize how bad it was. But they wanted to see, you know, and they’re big—not little kids. That’s why Haley didn’t go, but she wants to go later on.

CE: So all three of your children went with you?

SZ: Yeah. The bigger one, yeah. The others, they went—in fact, you know, Sal was there before and everything, to Israel. He went to everything.

HZ: Right.

SZ: Where the aunt lived. It’s good for them.

HZ: We have a lot of family in Israel.

SZ: Yeah, but the older one—

HZ: A cousin, he was here already a few times.

SZ: Yeah, but a lot of them, you know, died out, too.

CE: Do your children like that you are being interviewed and talking about this?

SZ: Oh, yes, sure—

CE: They think that's good?

SZ: —because they want to have something for the future. Like I told you, even my—all of them, they could—the one in Toledo or the one here, whenever it comes up, you know, like to collect money for Jews (inaudible).

HZ: My son is always—

SZ: Because—yeah, no matter what. And I keep telling him—

HZ: He was always—

SZ: No matter what you do, you have to support Israel, as long as there is an Israel, even if you never go there or live there. They'll have more respect for you, and you have a chance to live. You never know what's coming.

HZ: The same thing, like our son in Toledo; he is a lawyer. But when the Russian Jews came over, he was the one helping them all. He don't even take any money from them, he just help them.

SZ: Yeah, a lot of them did come.

HZ: With legal things, with everything here today.



SZ: Of course, he knows what that means to us.

CE: Now, when did you move to Tampa?

HZ: Eighty-two [1982].

SZ: Well, my daughter, with her husband and the (inaudible) here, nagged and said, “It’s cold. What for you need it?” Because we wanted—if we come, we said we go to the east coast because there I have a lot of friends, but we came here because they were—

CE: Because your daughter was here.

SZ: Yeah, was here with her husband, you know. She had—when you come here, even if she was for a long time lawyer and everything; but here you had to take the bar, so she was just a secretary, you know, and this and that. But then later, you know, she took over and everything. So she said, “Come, come,” so we did and we came.

CE: And what was that experience like?

SZ: Not so good. He doesn’t—see, I was at that time about fifty-one or fifty-two and he was in the fifties. He said, “I can’t walk around like this,” so he opened a store. So he opened a bakery.

CE: Here?

SZ: Yeah.

CE: Where was your bakery here?

SZ: Right here in Carrollwood, way back where K-Mart was, you know. Well, now it’s a  
—

HZ: Home Depot is there.

SZ: Home Depot.

HZ: Not Home Depot, Lowe's.

SZ: Lowe's.

CE: Lowe's.

SZ: It was a K-Mart. You know where Lowe's is? There was a K-Mart.

HZ: Right, the whole—

SZ: So he set up, and—see, 'cause he was used to it, we were used to it. Twenty-four hours they're open in so many stores, and the workers were like from Europe. They could work twenty-four hours, you didn't have to worry. And here, I was the dishwasher and the cleaning and everything because they disappeared. My daughter started to yell, "Give it up!" so we did.

CE: How long did you have your bakery here?

SZ: About four years.

HZ: Four years, something like this.

SZ: Yeah, you ask, even (inaudible) will tell you. A lot of people say, oh, they're missing us because of the bread in the bakery, but not so good.

CE: Yeah. So you retired at that point?

SZ: Yeah.

HZ: Yes.

SZ: At that time we didn't—we had a home, and before we bought it in Northdale, and then we built this one.

CE: So you've been retired a long time now?

HZ: Oh, yes. It's okay.

SZ: Well, he doesn't believe me. He didn't retire like that. You know what he did? Tell them, tell them!

CE: What did he do?

SZ: When he retired from the bakery, he didn't have patience just like that, so he went into Alessi's—you know Alessi's?

CE: Yes, I love that store.

SZ: So what having—so what—

HZ: I went there to buy, and—

SZ: He was a buyer at Alessi's—

CE: When it was the big Alessi's?

SZ: Yeah.

HZ: No, this was the same Alessi's—

CE: That was so wonderful.

HZ: Right, right.

CE: The big one.

SZ: So he went in and all the—

HZ: I was running the whole thing.

SZ: Of course the recipes, he was making coffee cakes and bread.

HZ: Till today I go in and I get whatever I want.

SZ: Well, you know, like ingredients—

HZ: I go into the office—not to the office, to the warehouse and everything.

SZ: Yeah. See, the ingredients you cannot get unless you go to wholesale place. So that's where he goes.

CE: So you were a buyer for Alessi's? Now, how long did you do that?

HZ: A few years.

SZ: Oh, at least was a few; it must be seven, eight, whatever. He said, "Oh, I'm tired," so he's done.

HZ: Then I gave it up.

SZ: But Alessi's was mad he quit.

HZ: Yeah, Phil Alessi was—

SZ: If a baker came in, he would tell them how to make babka and breads and this and that. So that's what he did. But it's good to—

HZ: In Toledo we had a big bakery, not just bread but everything.

SZ: Well, you were shipping.

HZ: We had a lot of people.

SZ: Shipping everything. But then the thing is, it's good to be busy, not just to sit down. Don't lay there. Because he went—from the Holocaust he's volunteering.

CP: At the museum?

SZ: Yeah, the one in—was the one—

HZ: In Clearwater.

SZ: The thing that I don't like—

CE: In Clearwater, the Jewish family?

HZ: Yeah.

SZ: But they're in St. Pete, mostly.

HZ: No, this is Clearwater.

SZ: It is?

HZ: I come.

SZ: Oh, I thought it was—

HZ: It is Clearwater.

CE: And what did you do when you volunteered?

HZ: No, we just—all the survivors took—

SZ: From Russia, from here—

HZ: We help out like other ones. We have to just discuss when somebody needs something—

SZ: When they—

HZ: When they need this or that. And we try to get the money for them.

CE: Okay.

SZ: But there's a lot of them, Russia—

HZ: We get the money from Germany or Switzerland.

CE: Okay.

SZ: To the wife and everything, because there's a lot of Russians who don't have Social Security.

HZ: Right.

SZ: You can't live on it, but it helps, you know.

CE: Yes, it does.

SZ: But they don't get Social Security, they don't get nothing.

HZ: We have a meeting again November 9.

SZ: The ninth, yeah.

CE: So, you're going to that?

HZ: Right.

CE: So how do you think the Holocaust influenced your relationship, for example?

SZ: Well, it helps. The main thing is when you go to different (inaudible), it's good they open because the kids go, you teach the kids and all of them, they're keeping up. But if you ever went to Washington, it's everything—of course our picture and our names are there, but from everybody. The kids went to visit. Of course I have kids who live there—well, at Johns Hopkins—so they said they went in there and they're really keeping it up a lot.

CE: Mr. Zyndorf, how do you think living through the Holocaust influenced you?

HZ: You know, you would never would want to go through [it], but we went through [it]. I don't know, a miracle or something, whatever happens—

SZ: But you can't forget as long as you live.

HZ: Never forget.

SZ: Never. Because something I had once with my granddaughter in Toledo, a talk. She was watching the *Exodus* and everything, so she say, “Oh, the school made me write a book or do a page or something, from the story.” So while I’m bringing this up, so she said, “I hate it. It’s not true, it’s (inaudible).” So I said—

CE: Wow!

SZ: “What? I show you pictures. It’s all true. And this—whatever you see, it’s nothing to compare.” So she says—and then, while I’m bringing up, she says—oh, we go outside and she sees bugs crawling around. I said, “You better spray it (inaudible).” So she says, “What, are you afraid of a little bug?” I said, “I lived with the dirt and with the bugs. You couldn’t believe it.”

HZ: But take a look how she changed when she went to Israel.

SZ: Yes.

HZ: And she’s still going back—she’s in Israel already, she has rooms and everything there, but she came here for a couple months. But she’s going right back.

SZ: Now she’s going back. She loves it.

HZ: But she found out. What a shame all over.

CP: Does it help to be married to somebody who can understand your experience?

HZ: Oh, yes, it means a lot.

SZ: A lot of our friends, yeah, most of them got married because a lot of their husbands died. But you see, I bring up—I had my twin brother living with me the whole time, and now, till today, we never had in my life a fight. Like I see a lot of them who have brothers or sisters or families or even parents, once in a great while they see them or talk to them. I said, “You don’t know what you are missing.” That’s the worst thing, ’cause he said it himself: we wish he would have somebody, but he doesn’t. But he’s close to the family of ours. One thing that’s with me, maybe because we were like that brought



up, but we're very, very close. My nieces and nephews or anything, they would give everything, and the same thing with us. Very close, no matter, and they all educated, not like us. They are doctors, lawyers, and everything. But I can call them, or they will call if I hear that somebody's sick, or he will call them up, and he's a really a genius doctor (inaudible). And now there's other two who are young, Lily and Seth.

CE: Can I ask you how you feel about Germany now?

HZ: Germany has entirely changed; it's not the same Germany. It's not the Germany what we knew.

SZ: She [Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel] is very nice to Israel. She is very—she helps out, she's sending a lot more money and doing and everything. Depends who. The other one wasn't so good; this one—

HZ: Merkel, she's terrific.

CE: So it's fair to say that you have better feelings toward Germany then toward Poland?

HZ: It's entirely different; it's not the same. You cannot be anti-Semite in Germany because they put you in jail.

SZ: But anyhow they much better in fact—

HZ: Right, that's the law there now?

SZ: Now. See, they put in the money. I wasn't there and I didn't see it. But now two years ago they opened in Berlin a synagogue with—made like a—

HZ: A whole section.

SZ: Yeah, like a museum—

HZ: And the government paid for everything.

SZ: It's like a museum, and they paid. And they helping out much better. She said and everything that she's sorry, and they all are. The younger generation is better; they read it and (inaudible), you know. Now, not like the young ones—

HZ: Because they teach them about it.

SZ: —who was a long time [ago]; they went with Hitler right away.

HZ: They teach in the school the Holocaust.

SZ: Yeah, and they teaching them and everything, and that's good.

HZ: It's entirely changed, what we went through.

SZ: Yeah.

CE: And how do you feel about the United States?

HZ: Everything is okay, but a lot of things changing too much here.

CE: In what way, do you think?

HZ: In not a good way, because everybody—it's good, it's free, but you cannot be like this going around and shooting and killing people for nothing.

SZ: I hate—I would never touch in my life a gun.

HZ: They have a gun, they shoot. They don't ask questions; they shoot first and then they are going to ask questions.

CP: And all the divisions, people are dividing themselves.

HZ: Right, right. That's what's bad about it.

SZ: I never saw so much fear.

HZ: They should be more together.

SZ: And care for each other. How can you go kill a person? It's like (inaudible). The only thing that I hope [I] live long enough to see that they finish up in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Maybe we'll be better in the United States and all over, because the money goes there. You know what Israel said, even all of them, we knew them all. We saw the picture there I have. It's a waste of money; it's never going to work. You know, French were there and the Russians were there, and nobody can win with Arabs.

CP: Yeah, we're not learning from our mistakes.

SZ: They're killing each other. They're killing each other.

HZ: Right, right.

SZ: See, that's what people don't understand.

HZ: Even [Charles] de Gaulle, he said not to bother with it.

SZ: And they are throwing out billions [of dollars], not millions.

CP: Yup.

CE: Do you have any final questions?

CP: I think we covered everything.

CE: Pretty much? Is there anything—you want to leave a final message for the audience?

SZ: No.

HZ: Just to get rid of the hate, that's all.

SZ: That's all. And I don't care, like I said. That I would like to see for the kids' sake, not for us.

HZ: Too much hate going around.

SZ: I don't care if you're black or white, or you're Catholic or Protestant or a Jew. Doesn't matter. You're a person.

HZ: You're a live person.

SZ: You're a person. Why could you hate another? That's what I would like to see, for the grandchildren's sake. For us, it doesn't matter anymore; it's too late. But for the kids, who knows? You hope, and you can just hope, that's all you can do.

HZ: If you get rid of the hate, you going to live entirely better. Like the Scandinavian countries, you go there and you feel entirely different.

SZ: You talk to them and everything, it's not like this.

HZ: We were there many times.

CE: Well that's a lovely message to leave at the end of the tape.

SZ: Yeah. It is, and it's true. That would be the best thing. Look at neighbors, so most of them—

HZ: They were all good neighbors.

SZ: One is Catholic, one is priest, one is Jew, it doesn't matter. We can go to—

HZ: Yes, the neighbor what you saw there, what she just left. She was in Israel for eight months and she loves to go back.

SZ: And she's not Jewish, but she loved it, she'd go back. The other ones, and the others are (inaudible) Jewish. It has nothing to do with the people. Who cares what your religion is?

CE: Well, we would like to thank you very, very much—

HZ: You're welcome.

CE: —for being a part of it.

SZ: Oh, no. Listen, thank you for doing it. And like I said, the kids will be surprised when you give them the—

CE: Wonderful, wonderful. We're glad to be a part of it.

HZ: We're going to make copies of it.

SZ: Yeah, you said they will make it, but either way.

HZ: Just send one, they will make it.

CE: All right, thank you very much.

SZ: Make ready for you.

CE: You have to take this off; don't forget.

SZ: Oh, yes, yes.

*End of interview*