

IMPORTANT

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AJR

Winston House, 2 Dollis Park

London N3 1HF

ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	67

Interviewee Surname:	Frankel
Forename:	Herman
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	4 April 1927
Interviewee POB:	Nowy Sacz, Poland

Date of Interview:	25 July 2004
Location of Interview:	Manchester
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	4 hours and 20 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 67

NAME: HERMAN FRANKEL

DATE: SUNDAY 25 JULY 2004

LOCATION: MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

RL: The interview today is with Herman Frankel and today's date is Sunday July 25th 2004. The interview is in Manchester and I am Rosalyn Livshin.

HF: He is in Canada ...

RL: Yes.

HF: He is an electronic engineer.

RL: Right.

HF: Between six of them there is a firm that he built up, when he started seven years ago there were seven electronic engineers working, now he has got 200 of them working and they bought the boss out.

RL: Yes.

HF: Between six of them they had to buy him out, because he had a pacemaker put in and he was not supposed to come to work. He used to come to work before anybody else came in and threw the papers all over the place.

RL: So yes, right, so let's make a start.

HF: Right.

RL: All right. So if you tell me first your name.

HF: My name is Herman Frankel and everybody knows me as Harry. I was born in Neu Sandec, Nowy Sacz in Poland on the 4th of February 1927.

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RL: Do you have a Hebrew name?

HF: Yes, I have got a Hebrew name, Hersch Tzvi Ben Avraham Myer.

RL: Were you named after anybody?

HF: I was named after my mother's, Oleh Vashalom, great uncle from Vienna.

Voice: (Can I come in?)

HF: Yes, you can come in.

RL: And, so how old does that make you now?

HF: I am 77 years old. I have been trying to get the AJR to do this for quite a few years.

Voice: Excuse me, do you want this cushion?

HF: No.

RL: Can you tell me your parent's names and where they were born?

HF: My father was born in Galicia.

Wife's voice in background.

RL: Shhh, we are just filming now. , we have started.

Voice: Oh are you, I just wondered, that is what I am saying, can I just have that TV times please, that is what I wanted.

Cameraman: This one.

Voice: Yes, just the TV times, I am sorry, I don't want to look at the Four Walls, thank you, I am sorry.

RL: Ok. So, your parents names and where they were born.

HF: My father was born in Nowy Sacz, Galizia, Neu Sandec because it used to belong to the Austrian, what you call it, Austrian regiment in those years. He went to University in Vienna, and that is where he met my mother, and he got married in 1907 in Vienna. Then they came back home to Neu Sandec and my sister was born in 1912, then

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my eldest brother was born in 1922 and I was born in 1927, and my sister brought me up because she was 16 years older than me.

RL: So there were just the three of you?

HF: Yes, there was just the three of us. And my father had a Wasserleitung installer business, and he also belong to Seum [?] which is like a Master's Union. And he also organised in our town, any Master of any employment who wanted to take somebody as an apprentice they used to come to him to sign the apprenticeship, because my father had the office, the law for it, it had to be done by law, he had to sign and stamp every apprenticeship.

RL: So what was his official title?

HF: The ...

RL: What was his official business?

HF: His title was Ratz? (in Polish) , which is a Seum, like a Master's Union and he was representative for Nowy Sacz, Neu Sandec, also he belonged to the government, he was a Member of Parliament, the only Yiddisher person in those years, before the war, because of all the goodness that he done for everybody, they all didn't do it.

RL: Can I just ask you something about his background? His parents, you know his parents, anything you know about his parents, your grandparents and how he was brought up.

HF: I know very little about that side of the family, my grandparents side, because when I was, I can only remember when I was five or six years old, my grandmother, G-d Rest Her Soul, my father's mother, because she lived with my uncle, Henry, which was my father's brother, youngest brother, and he had also two sisters, one lived in Krakow, was married in Krakow, and the other one lived in Lvov, which now is Ukraine, and she had a perfume factory, which is now run by the Ukrainian Government.

RL: That factory?

HF: That factory, and I had one cousin in Nowy Sacz, younger than me. I had one cousin in Lemberg, Lvov, a girl, I can't remember her name, younger than me, I had three cousins in Krakow. The twins were three years older than me, and the eldest one was about six years older than me. They used to come, we used to come together, the family, to Nowy Sacz, from Krakow, from Lemberg, from Lvov, they used to come to our home town, because that was the main place where the family originated from, so they all used to come to Nowy Sacz , we were a very close family.

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RL: Do you know what kind of education your father had?

HF: My father went to the University of Vienna.

RL: What did he study?

HF: I can't, I think he was studying engineering and plumbing and things on that side as far as I can gather, because I was too young to know about it. He met my mother there, and they got married in 1907.

RL: Did his brother go to university?

HF: I beg your pardon?

RL: Did his brother go to university?

HF: No.

RL: What did he do?

HF: He was a metallur ... he took the premises over from my grandfather I believe and he was making anything from brass, candlesticks, anything like that, he used to make it himself, for people. He used to sell that.

RL: So what did your grandfather do?

HF: He was, that was his business, he had smelting ovens, in the cellar, and also he had, what was its name, what is the English word for this ... the English word for it ... I can't just think, those machines as far as I can remember were not worked by electricity, were worked by hand, which was, to make, like from a piece of brass to make candlesticks, so he used to make things like that, not only candlesticks he could make anything at all, what people wanted, out of brass, out of metal, anything.

RL: Did they then sell those things or did they pass them on to shops to sell?

HF: They passed them onto shops; they passed them also on to whoever wanted them. He made, as far as I can remember, he made very little profit on it when they sold to private people, mostly friends from the Shul, what's its name, candlesticks or candelabra, or even, he used to make, not small but quite big, I would say about 12 inches tall, menorahs, he used to make it by himself, he employed nobody, he worked by himself while his wife was cooking upstairs, it was all in one building. The worst part of it was war broke out. In 1939 my father was taken as a hostage with 12 other members of the community, including Rabbonim. Fortunately for us he was released after six months

Tape 1: 10 minutes 10 seconds

because he suffered with diabetes and heart condition and he came home at the beginning of 1940, and that is when my sister got married as well, and I had a bar mitzvah in 1940.

RL: Now we have jumped a bit. Because I wanted to get your childhood first and then we will come slowly on to the war if that is alright.

HF: Yes, certainly ...

RL: So with your father, what kind of religious upbringing did he have.

HF: Jewish Religious, we used to go to Shul regular, every Saturday morning, not ourselves, well I mean ourselves, my father, and brother and myself, and my uncle, together, we used to go to the Shul which was just round the corner from us and there were about four, as far as I can remember there were about four Shuls. We lived on the east side of the town, on the west side of the town, that is where the Frumme Yidden were, I mean the really frum, that, that didn't work, davening all the time, they had geschäft on the side, but that was the frummer part of the town. And I went to school until the age of 12.

RL: First of all, which Shul did you go to?

HF: I can't remember.

RL: You don't remember the Shul.

HF: I was too young to remember.

RL: Was your father a member of any Chassidic group?

HF: There was, there was a Chassidic group in our side as well, and he joined, they had a big Shul, there must have been about 100, 120 members, at least.

RL: What Chassidic sect was it?

HF: It was, I am looking for the word now, it was a Sephardi sect, it was very, moderate frum, for those years.

RL: And was your father a member of that?

HF: My father was a great member of the Shul. He used to give donation regular to the Shul.

RL: Did they have any particular kind of dress?

Tape 1: 12 minutes 43 seconds

HF: Well, my father was modern, because he had to, because being a member of Seum and being a member of the government he had to dress in ordinary, but in the Shul they dressed, not the way we dress, but the other side clothes. Like the proper Chassidim used to wear, and we used to wear, quite a lot of them, members of our Shul used to have sheitels, not shteitels, shtreimel, they used to wear shtreimel as well, not quite a lot, quite a few.

RL: Your father didn't have one?

HF: No, no, because ...

RL: He was more modern?

HF: He was more modern, he had to be more modern being with his interest and commitment to the two organisations, which was the member of the Seum and the member of the, also the government. He used to travel quite a lot to Warsaw, quite often, and sometimes he used to stay in Warsaw all the week, with Yiddisher people in Warsaw. But, as I said, I was only young, I can very little remember.

RL: Can you tell me about your mother's family and her background?

HF: Well, my mother's family was in Vienna, I never met anybody from my mother's family, because my mother used to go only with a sister, up to about nine years old, before my brother was born, after that she very rarely went to Vienna. But I believe that she had three brothers and two sisters. And ...

RL: Did you ...

HF: One of the brothers lived in New York, emigrated to America. One of the brothers was metallurgic and he married a Danish woman, a Yiddisher woman, and he had a son called Harry. That was his proper name, Harry. And he joined the OSS at the beginning of the war because he spoke quite a few languages, he was educated, and when I met him in 1969 in Wiesbaden, it was just before Yom Kippur. He took me to the Shul there, and the Shul was unbelievable, as you walk into the courtyard it was like a monument, and from the monument a Magen Dovid raised from it and it was lit 24 hours a day, and the Shul was just behind the Magen Dovid, a beautiful Shul, brand new Shul, beautiful, and the people walking there, in their shirts, no jackets, nothing at all, all the young, all modern people, it was a mechiya to meet my cousin for the first time and also a mechiya to see the Shul but fortunately the way I met him was because my wife and I went in 1969 to Vienna because I had an uncle there and I found out to the red cross looking for, and I found out my uncle was in Vienna, and he was 90 years old and he was still with his wife, and he met us at the airport, he was 90 years old and every morning he used to go to his office, he was the president of Diamond Cutters Association in Vienna. He used

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to walk to the office, three kilometres there and three kilometres back and he used to come in at half past ten in the morning, picked his wife up, and they used to go just round the corner to the Jewish kosher restaurant for meals and he took us there a few, a couple of times.

RL: Was this your mother's brother?

HF: My mother's brother, yes. Uncle Alfred. He passed away, Auntie Mitzi, that is the one I was telling you, she was Countess Mitzi, but marrying a Jewish person, she had to change her name, her birth certificate and everything was changed to Singer, Mitzi Singer, and that was her name when she got married to my uncle. Because the royalty then didn't believe in marrying out, but she insisted, and she said if you don't give me permission I am marrying just the same, and she did marry him, and she lived with him until she was 90 and she passed away, about six months after we saw her in 1969.

RL: Did she have to become Jewish?

HF: She had to become Jewish, she went specially for instructions and they used to go to Shul, and they had no children, and when we met them in 1969 my auntie was as tall as my wife, which was 5 foot, 4 foot 10, only a small lady. I have got a photograph of her which I will show you later on. And she always said, that she, belonged to the Hapsburg family, and when we used to go sightseeing she took us to Schönbrunn and she said, "That used to be my home", which was fantastic, her memory, considering she was 90 years old, her memory was fantastic.

RL: What happened to them during the war?

HF: They were hidden, they were hidden. They were hidden as far as my uncle was saying by the Hapsburg family, because she was a Hapsburg, it wasn't the first relations of hers, but cousins of hers were still in touch with her, before the war and through the war they kept in touch with her because she was part of the family just the same. And she passed away in 1969, late 1969, and my uncle unfortunately passes away broken hearted six months afterwards.

RL: Do you know what your mother's father did for a living? Your grandfather?

HF: My grandfather, no, my grandfather on my mother's side, I was told had a big furnishing business in Vienna. Well I mean, a furniture business, a furnishing shop, and that was his business.

RL: What kind of religious upbringing did your mother have?

HF: Jewish upbringing, a very frum Jewish upbringing because in those days Jews were known for Yiddishkeit, very well known, even now, after the war they still carry on with
Tape 1: 21 minutes 35 seconds

it. I have got a cousin's wife and two nephews in Vienna now. The only time we get in touch is Rosh Hashanah unfortunately.

RL: Now you know you were showing me how, was it a great grandfather was the ...

HF: That was on my grandmother's side.

RL: Now which side, was that your mother's side or your father's side?

HF: My father's side.

RL: Just explain to me how this worked out.

HF: It worked out on my grandmother's side. My grandmother's family were, came from a very frum, people, they used to belong to a Yeshiva, they used to belong to a, to a religious sect in Poland, and one of the great, great, great grandfather of mine was a Sanz Rebbe.

RL: What was his name?

HF: I can't remember. I have got it in a book but I can't remember because I was only a youngster.

RL: Was it Halberstam?

HF: I will show you ...

RL: No, you can't get up ...

HF: I show you afterwards, I have got the book here with it, I will show you afterwards.

RL: That was on your father's side, your father's mother's side.

HF: That was on my grandmother's side.

RL: Yes, yes.

HF: On my grandmother's side, they were all Rabbonim, but this was only one, the Sanz Rebbe was well known ...

RL: What kind of education did your mother have?

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HF: That I cannot tell a lot, because she was brought up in Vienna and she very little spoke of her education, and when she came to Nowy Sacz, Neu Sandec, after the marriage she mostly spoke Viennese or German as we used to say, or Yiddish, and then she started picking up Polish as well because she had to. Because she had to go shopping and one thing and another and they were all Polish, but right up to the end she used to speak with broken Polish, a Viennese accent.

RL: What was your earliest memory as a child?

HF: My earliest memory as a child was when I was a youngster, about four or five years old, I was sent to Vienna to Yeshiva. And I was in Vienna until 1938 when the Germans came in, I had to go back home then.

RL: Who did you live with?

HF: I lived with my uncle. Uncle Ludwig.

RL: Why did they send you to Vienna?

HF: To get my educ ... my Jewish education in Vienna. When I came back to Poland in 1938 I went to a goyishke school, because that was the only one there was, but after the school age to go to cheder, to teach for Bar Mitzvah.

RL: What kind of home did your parents have in Poland? Can you describe where they lived?

HF: They lived in an apartment. a two bed roomed apartment, and also in my dining room, my father had an office in the corner, but also in the cellars of the apartments he had all the business, all the equipment, everything, all the supply pipes and everything else was all everything in the cellars, he had about three or four cellars joined together.

RL: So was the apartment on the ground floor?

HF: No, first floor, there was on the first floor, that is all. And under the roof we used to have also a place where we used to keep cases and things like that and in the winter we used to hang up the washing in there. It was all clean, everything nice there. You couldn't get into the ... you had to go into the main one, every apartment had their own space there, for drying the clothes, in winter, because the winter there was proper winter. The snow, when the winter comes with the snow, when I was about four, it could be between ten and twelve inches deep sometimes. As a child I used to use skis, I used to go to cheder on skies, because you couldn't walk on the snow proper, although it was dry snow, it wasn't like here, it was dry. It only was about 35/40 kilometres from Zako Paner and I used to belong to Hashomer Hatzair. With Hashomer Hatzair we used to go every weekend, like Sunday and Monday and we used to go to Zako Paner on skis. And we

Tape 1: 27 minutes 22 seconds

stayed there on a special, we used to have a special hut there that belonged to Hashomer Hatzair there, and we used to stay there, and we used to have leaders there to look after us.

RL: How old were you when you did that?

HF: I started when I was four years old.

RL: You were four years old?

HF: When I started, my skis were only about two feet long, it was only really, that part of my life was really enjoyable, because I had all of my friends there with me, and one of the leaders of Hashomer Hatzair used to work for us. He was employed by my father. G-d Rest His Soul. That was my pleasant time.

RL: You know you were describing the apartment, how many apartments were in the block? How many ...

HF: The block was in the scale of a U, like a U, and on our side there was two, three upstairs, two downstairs, with two shops. One was, one used to sell beer and wine and liquor and the other shop belonged to Yiddisher people. They used to sell all the Yiddisher stuff there, like the soap, the Yiddisher soap and salt and that sort of thing, but nothing else, but no bread, because we had the bakery around the corner, I used to go to the bakery every day, or every second day, whenever we needed bread, I used to go Friday for Challahs.

RL: How did you get on with your neighbours?

HF: We did, even with the Polish neighbours. I got, I have been very close with one of the families, he was 12 months older than me, and his sister was 12 months younger than me, and we, we used to play together, after school we used to study together and then we went to Poland in 97. I went to the town hall to look for my family and then something hit me to ask, you know in my mind to ask about him, I remembered his name, so I asked the lady, that was on the computer, "is there a Richard Obrzud here in Nowy Sacz?" She said, "One minute, I will have a look." And she had a look on the computer and she said, "Yes, he lives ...". And she gave me the number of this flat, apartment where he used to live, and on the way from the town hall, on the way to the hotel, we popped in, and we went to see him. When I saw him he looked at me strange, he didn't recognise me, but when I took my glasses off he just started crying, he got hold of me, kissed me like a lost brother. So I asked him where his sister is, he said, "She lives not far from the hotel." He says, "I will get in touch with her." So they both came for supper at the Hotel. Colacia they call it there, they came to the hotel and the sister got hold of me like a

brother, they were very, very kind. What do I mean kind, they, kind, kind to me, showed that they still remembered me, not as a Jew, but as a friend.

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And that is how they treated me, and she told me that one of her worker that used to work for our firm lives round the corner from and she will tell him to come and see me, and he did come to see me. I was upstairs having a shower because we were going to, what is it, a vegetable restaurant, and when the receptionist phoned me up he said, "There is a gentleman here, would like to have a word with you, can I come down."

I said, "Yes, I can come down but I have got nothing on, I have got my birthday suit on." She said, "Well come down as you are." She said, "I will tell him that you will be down in a few minutes." So I came down, and I couldn't recognise him because it was 1939 last time I saw him, I was only 12, ten years old when I saw him last time, and he came in specially to give me his apprenticeship that he had with my father, G-d rest his soul, and also a photograph that was taken in 1936, in Zreszow where they were building new buildings and they were putting the water and central heating on the photograph and I got the photograph enlarged, you can see twelve people there with my father on scaffolding as well, and that was our work, my father's work, not mine, but, he wouldn't come in, he came upstairs to the hotel and I introduced him to my children, our two daughters and our son as well, and he wouldn't stay, he said, "I have lost my wife 18 months ago and I don't go out to restaurants, I don't go out drinking, I don't do, I just look after myself and I cook for myself, thank you very much", because I invited him for supper, but he wouldn't come, he wouldn't come. He said, "What I wanted to do is to give you the photograph for your memory, for you and your children to keep as a memento and also the apprenticeship that I signed with your father in 1936."

RL: You are saying that you got on quite well with the non-Jewish ...

HF: With the neighbours ... yes ...

RL: Did you experience any hostility from the neighbours at all?

HF: Not in our block, not in our block, we never had any hostilities, because they knew too well my father, they knew us too well. My brother used to pal out with a neighbour, and his name was Gruber, and his father was German, but he adopted a Polish name, but he still name was Gruber, and he had a big shop on the main street of paints and everything but paints to do, white spirit and metholated spirit, and everything like that he had, and he also had aero license of Nowy Sacz, he had a petrol station in the airport, which was only a small airport, but he had the licence for it, and on the place where the airport was they built the hotel.

RL: Did you experience any hostility at all?

HF: Not while I was in Nowy Sacz, no.

RL: And your father, did he ever comment ...?

Tape 1: 35 minutes 40 seconds

HF: No, he never, we never had any problems at all, with any neighbours or anybody in Nowy Sacz, because everyone respected my father, he was a very, very respected man, my father in Nowy Sacz.

RL: Was your father active in the Jewish community?

HF: Yes.

RL: What kind of things?

HF: Whatever he could do he did for the Jewish community in our part of the town, because we didn't mix a lot with the Frummer Yidden, because we were dressed differently, and sometimes my father walked without a hat because he had to go to meetings, so naturally he didn't bother. But on our side of the town they all had respect for my father, they all knew him, and anything that they needed in the Shul my father was the first one to start a collection for the Shul.

RL: Do you remember who the Rabbi was of the Shul?

HF: No, I don't remember, I was too young.

RL: So did you not go to school at all in Nowy Sacz?

HF: I did.

RL: You went to school in Nowy Sacz?

HF: Yes, I went to school for 18 months in Nowy Sacz.

RL: Which school did you go to?

HF: It was a Catholic school, Kosciuszko School, well we didn't call it school, we called it, what was the word ... sometimes you see things like that, the memory goes sometimes, it is too long ...

RL: And how did you get on there?

HF: We, I wasn't the only Yiddisher pupil in the school, there was quite a lot, because that was the only nearish school in our district, and we used to keep to ourselves, and nobody bothered. Once or twice there were one or two boys that started fighting, but very, very rare, very rare. We used to keep ourselves to ourselves when it came to the playground, I visualise now even, after so many years, we used to keep to the right hand

side of the playground, and there must have been about 20 Yiddisher boys together. We used to play together football, we used to play basketball, we used to play everything, we

Tape 1: 38 minutes 33 seconds

used to keep between ourselves, but we mixed together just the same, there was no ... We didn't meet any anti-Semitism at school, just once or twice that I can remember one of the boys started something but the other boys quietened him down. We never fought with them, we didn't have to, because the other boys that knew us were very, very kind, were very supportive of the Jewish boys.

RL: And did you go to Cheder there?

HF: I did go to Cheder, I had to go to Cheder, not because I wanted to, because I was told to, and when your father, G-d Rest His Soul, tells you to do something, you do it. If you don't you got a hack over your ear, which I did get. I did get quite a few hacks, but it wasn't hard ones, just to teach me a lesson to do as I was told to do.

RL: And do you remember anything about the Cheder?

HF: I remember the place where the Cheder was, the Cheder was adjoined to the Shul and we were sitting on the benches with the tables in front of us, and learning for the Bar Mitzvah. We also learned the haphtorah, we had to, and I had my Bar Mitzvah in 1940, at home, because we had to put outside people to watch out for the Germans while I had the Bar Mitzvah. Same as my sister, G-d rest her soul, when she got married she got married, she got married in our apartment, and also the same thing, we had boys outside looking out for the Germans, just in case they came into our home. And we had more than a minyan in our house, all the neighbours and all the friends used to come in. His family, our family, and I have got the photograph of my sister's wedding, I was given that after, my last time I saw my brother in law was 1940 ... sorry ... that's right 1945, January 1945, when I went back for the second time to Dachau, I saw my brother through the barrier. I couldn't shake hands with him, and my brother in law was with him, together. That was the last time I saw both of them. He survived, he went back to Poland. He married again, but I don't have any hard feelings for him that he married again, and he had a baby girl, same as my sister had, G-d Rest Her Soul. We kept in touch, we were mishpocha, it doesn't matter about that, eventually he went to Israel and I lost touch with him, because he had a brother in Israel. It was Palestine in those years.

RL: Now coming back to school, you say you were only at that school in Nowy Sacz for 18 months ...

HF: 18 months, yes ...

RL: And then you were sent to Vienna ...

HF: No ..

RL: No?

Tape 1: 42 minutes 28 seconds

HF: That was before ... I came from Vienna in 1938.

RL: So you were at the school in Vienna first?

HF: I was at the Yeshiva in Vienna, until 1938 ...

RL: Right ...

HF: And then when the Germans came to Austria I was sent back to Nowy Sacz, to Neu Sandec.

RL: And that is when you went to school ...

HF: To school there ...

RL: Right, right ...

So, when you were sent to Vienna, what did you? How did you find it? What did you think of Vienna?

HF: I was a boy. What can I think of Vienna? All I knew was where my uncle lived, and where the cheder was, that is all that I knew because I was too young to think about anything else.

RL: Did you mix at all with any non Jews in Vienna?

HF: The only people that I mixed with were my cousins in Vienna, the families, mostly, because I was only a child, they kept an eye on me and being the youngest of the lot they used to bring me chocolates, they used to bring me sweets all the time, that kind of thing I remember.

RL: Which school did you go to?

HF: Yeshiva in Vienna.

RL: Did it have a name?

HF: I don't remember. I was only young.

RL: Did you have a secular education there as well as a Hebrew education?

HF: I had the education there, the secondary education there, but only in German, in Viennese I was taught by my uncle, I didn't go to school, I was taught by my uncle, in

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the grammar, the Austrian grammar, I was reading as well, because at home was everything spoken in Austrian, because my mother couldn't speak Polish, that's why.

RL: But in Yeshiva, was it just Hebrew learning or did you have other learning as well?

HF: Only Hebrew.

RL: Only Hebrew.

HF: Only Hebrew, they didn't believe to teach anything else there. The place was only for one thing, you had to learn Hebrew, and when I started, from the beginning I had to learn alef, beis, and if I didn't know it after a week I had a hack from the Rebbe. They were very strict there, but very, very good. They were very good. As far as I remember I was the only one from Nowy Sacz, the rest of them were Viennese boys.

RL: So when you went back to Nowy Sacz and went to that Catholic school did you not find it hard?

HF: I did find it hard for the first month or two, because in the end I was speaking German, Viennese, and when I came back to Nowy Sacz again I couldn't speak Polish. I had forgot, when I went to Vienna I was four years old, so in four years I forgot Polish, but I picked it up very quick, but fortunately my teacher was a friend of my father. He kept an eye on me. He used to keep me after school and taught me more, not just the writing but mostly speaking, pronunciation of words, and that is how it carried on.

RL: What about subjects like maths and you know other subjects?

HF: Well, the first year, first year maths, first year grammar, we were taught that at the beginning of school, especially the maths and grammar and Polish spelling, it is unbelievable, I cannot explain to you the Polish language, probably you have heard that from other people, the same thing, it is very, very hard to learn Polish. When I went first time to Poland after fifty odd years, 58 years, and I don't remember a word of Polish, but after three days I picked it up right away back again. I could converse with people, but when I went to the hotel and wanted a coffee, my wife wanted a jug of milk, but I didn't know what jug is in Polish. I had forgot, so she my wife said "ask the waitress", so I called the waitress and asked her, so she told me, it is the same as cup for coffee, you said cup for milk, you said "Cuppe von Lekko", I thought I would never forgot after that, but still it was strange for me going back. But when I went back, when I found out about the Beis Olam, I broke my heart really, I will come to that eventually.

RL: When you went to school in Vienna, did you go back to your parents during the holidays?

HF: No.

Tape 1: 48 minutes 14 seconds

RL: No.

HF: No, I stayed in Vienna all of the time, for four years, for four years I stayed there with my uncle, with my other uncles and aunties, in the holiday time I was moved from one family, from one uncle and auntie to another, they were so proud to have me, they wouldn't let me go back home. They all wrote to them and told them, they wrote to my family at home, to my mother and father, G-d rest their souls, they wrote to them, how they would love to keep me there for good, because I was the youngest of the family, so unfortunately I had to go back when the Germans came in.

RL: So do you remember the Germans coming in?

HF: Yes, I do.

RL: Can you tell me about that?

HF: Well, when the Germans came to Vienna, there was a pandemonium in Vienna. The Jewish people didn't know what to do. And the first thing, my uncle and I, my mother's family packed me off straight away to Nowy Sacz. I went by train to Krakow. My uncle and auntie picked me up at Krakow and put me on the train to Nowy Sacz, and I was met by my family, and that was 1938 and I started back to school there, and it was difficult for me to adjust myself again to the Polish language.

RL: And how did the family get on in Austria after the German occupation?

HF: That I didn't know, we didn't find out until after the, well I didn't find out until after the war that I had a cousin and uncle and auntie in Vienna, and I had an uncle in Amsterdam who was, who was working in Hamburg before the war, in metallurgy. He emigrated from, what's its name, from Holland to New York, to his brother, in 1950 odd and then I found out that he came out on the grand train. It was summertime I believe, and he nearly passed away from the sunstroke, in New York, my uncle. I had a letter from my uncle telling me about it. And I have got a cousin in there, but he doesn't bother with me, and I tried to find out 30 years ago when I never heard from them, so I phoned them up and I asked him, "What has happened with uncle and auntie?" and he said, "I am sorry I have got no time." And he put the phone down on me. He wouldn't say anything to me, so I phoned his son up and asked his son. He was married, and I asked him, "Stephen, what happened to grandma and grandpa?"
"I am sorry, dad told me not to say anything. Have you spoken to my dad?"
So I said, "Yes, I spoke to your dad and he put the phone down on me."
He said, "I am sorry but I can't say anything."

I don't know what happened to them, to these days. I don't know what happened to him, I have had no communication with him whatsoever, I have had no communication from New York at all.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 23 seconds

RL: So you were back in Nowy Sacz and the Germans ...

HF: Came in ... yes ...

RL: Can you remember that day?

HF: Yes, I can, very well ...

RL: Can you describe that?

HF: Well they came into our home town and my father was taken as a hostage with twelve other people, eleven other people, there were twelve people taken as a hostage, because my father was well known in Nowy Sacz. Unfortunately because, fortunately, or unfortunately he suffered with a heart condition and diabetes so they let him go, not only because of that, but because they needed work from his friend, they needed us to do some repairs towards the winter because the pipes were bursting. And they were lead pipes that we naturally had to go and repair, and I used to go with my brother and that is how I started in the business. And I got an apprenticeship as well from the firm, mind you it is in Polish unfortunately but I worked, for the Wehrmacht and I worked for the Gestapo. Sometimes I went on my own and sometimes I went with other if they needed two people, and I went to one place and they went to another, until 1942 when there was segregation in our home town.

RL: Where you still living in the same place?

HF: In our apartment, where the segregation was, we had to move from our apartment into a working class ghetto.

RL: When did that happen?

HF: That happened in 1941, towards the end of 1941.

RL: Up until that time how were you treated?

HF: I wasn't treated well, because we had the yellow bands, and not just the yellow bands, we had to have a yellow stars as well, and wherever we walked in the street we had to give up the pavements when the German soldiers to get on, and if we didn't get off you would get a hack from them, with a hand or a rifle, it makes no difference, but some of them got to know us through working for them and they were not so bad. Some places, when we used to do some jobs for them, and we would do the job, and they

wanted to give us a certain time to do the work, and we finished the work early, some of the soldiers used to give us a parcel of food so we could put it in the bag with the tools and hide it. Well some of them didn't bother, they just slung us out when the work was finished, well, that was it up till 1942.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 45 seconds

RL: What did you do for food? How did you get food during that period?

HF: We used to manage to scrounge, as we said scrounge from the Poles, we used to manage. When we use to go to work to the Germans, that is when people, they used to give us apples in summer, in the winter they used to give us some fruit, bread in the pockets, though that news they used to bring it to our places on the quiet. They used to know what they were doing, and when they came in they used to, they used to knock on the door to come in. They said they came about work, and they bought some food in to us.

RL: And you were able to manage like that?

HF: We managed, yes ...

RL: Was there any other way that you got food besides people bringing ...

HF: No ... no ...

RL: No other way ...

HF: No other ways ...

RL: So you were completely reliant on other people ...

HF: On other people, yes, to supply us ...

RL: And these were non-Jewish ...

HF: They were non-Jewish people who knew us, and also ex workers, who used to, work for our firm, they used to come very often with small parcels, whatever they could scrounge. I remember one time, we were in the ghetto, the working man's ghetto, and there, there were two fellows who used to work for us who came in, and one had a hen with him, and the other one had two breads with him. They used to give us that, and my father turned round and said, "What can we do with the hen? We haven't got a shochet here." So my brother said, "Don't worry, I know where the Rabbi lives." He went to the Rabbi and the Rabbi killed the hen, and he waited there for an hour before he brought it home and in the meantime the hen was hanging up. While the hen was hanging up he was plucking, meanwhile the hen was hanging up before we bought it home. He was five years older than me. Everything that happened and was done was done on the QT, on the quiet, whatever we did.

RL: This film is about to end so we will just stop here. Ok.

TAPE 2

So this is the interview with Herman Frankel and it is tape 2.

So, we were talking about this period when the Germans came in, before the ghetto was formed and you were still living in your apartment. Were there other Jews who were also still living in their apartments?

HF: Yes. Up until 1940, the end of 1940 there were two districts of Jewish community in our home town. Afterwards they made two ghettos out of it. We had to move from our apartment and go to a working man's ghetto, which we changed the apartment for those years a bungalow there, in that district. So we changed with those people who used to live in that place, with our apartment, and that was a working man's ghetto. In the frummer ghetto they had it upstairs in the west side of the town, and there was barbed around. Our ghetto, the working class ghetto, wasn't barbed altogether, we only had signs on the corner of each entrance and exit and we could only go out three ways, the fourth way was a small river so we couldn't go. There was two rivers going through our home town. There is Dunajec which is the big river which they used to send logs in summer down to the mills, and the other one is too small, but they joined together, just outside the town. That will come more important after, about the rivers. When we moved into the working class ghetto, we still worked from there.

RL: So what date did you move into that working class ghetto?

HF: End of 1940.

RL: The end of 1940.

HF: Yes.

RL: Right. So up until then did the Shuls continue to operate?

HF: No.

RL: No. Did all religious activity ...

HF: All religious activity, all the Shuls and everything else, whenever they could, they hid, because when they came in, as I said my father was taken as a hostage, they wanted gold, they wanted so much gold, they wanted so much silver, whatever they could get hold of, but most of them, they found out that some Shuls, like our Shul, we didn't have gold, we had brass, all the candelabras and everything in the Shul was made out of brass, which my uncle done, and my grandfather which I can't remember, he used to make as well. And that was in our Shul, but in the big Shuls on the other side of town they had

some gold and they took it off them. Even the tops of the Torah, they take everything off, and then eventually when the segregation was, in 1942, they burned all the Shuls, just before the segregation.

Tape 2: 3 minutes 37 seconds

RL: Now first of all, so what happened to religious activity in 1940? Did people try to ... ?

HF: They tried to, but there was a law, from the Germans, that we couldn't gather together more than five people, so they couldn't have a minyan, but what they did is to going into the Shul, they went under the Shul to the cellar, where some places had cheder under the Shul and they used to have a minyan there. Our Shul unfortunately had no cellar so we couldn't go in there, but they were very, very strict, they watched everything, especially, not the Wehrmacht, but the Gestapo. They were everywhere, everywhere, and we were fortunate because we were working, and we could move about the town, and we could see what was going on, but, after that, we couldn't go out any more.

RL: And you say it was during that period that you had your Bar Mitzvah? And your sister got married?

HF: That was 1940, the beginning of 1940.

RL: That was at this point.

HF: Yes. That was, that was, well, I would say that this was an easier time than yet, it was the beginning of it, and they were not as strict as later on. Once the government, the German government settled in Krakow, they were the overseers of our town, and of the surrounding towns, wherever the Jewish community were, like the Jewish community in Nowy Sacz and Tarnov they used to bring to Nowy Sacz, all the Jewish communities. That is where the Jewish community got bigger, especially on the frummer side mostly, but from 1940, then 1940, when the two ghettos were made it was very hard to go out, but we managed, because we were working for them. We had special permits from the Gestapo and we could move about, but just from one place to another, from my place where we used to live we could go out to the Kaserne as they used to say, the Wehrmacht Kaserne or the Gestapo buildings where they used to stay, massive buildings. We used to go to work in there, but we had to have the passes, we couldn't move without the passes. My brother, myself and my brother in law, we had three passes in our house. My father, G-d Rest His Soul, never went anywhere, never went anywhere.

RL: What did the women do?

HF: Nothing, just sit in the house, going from neighbour to neighbour, they couldn't move anywhere.

RL: Was there any committee in charge of the ghetto, the working ...

HF: There were committees, I suppose I can remember, of the eldermen, as we used to call them, they were in charge of the ghettos. Our ghetto was in charge, one of the main

Tape 2: 7 minutes 29 seconds

ones was my father and my uncle, because they were well known, and also there were some solicitors, and one or two Rabbis as well, in our district.

RL: And was there any food provision within the ghetto?

HF: I don't remember how the food provision was provided, but we just had enough to live on, or to breed on, because we had no supplies of anything. Sometimes the goyim used to throw out over the fence, bread or something, whatever they could. Those that knew where we lived or whatever, they used to come into our, they had permission to come in, into the ghetto, provided they had nothing on them, but sometimes they came in with a working bag, with tools in it, to see if we needed any help working for the Germans, and inside the bag they used to have some food for us. We were very lucky people at that time, but after that ...

RL: Was there any activity organised in the ghetto?

HF: There was no activity allowed of any kind, there was no, no more than a group of up to five people. If they seen any more people they didn't shout, they didn't say anything, they just shot in the air with a rifle, disperse. But they never killed anybody at that time.

RL: So how big was this particular ghetto? How many streets would you say?

HF: That working class ghetto was, I would say, a third of a kilometre square.

RL: And was it surrounded by a fence.

HF: No, there was no fence.

RL: There was no fence ...

HF: There was no need for a fence because, as I said before, the Kamienica river used to run on one side of the ghetto, and on the other side of the ghetto there was nothing else. On one side was only ground, unploughed in those years, that was on two sides, and the other two sides was only allowed to go to work. When they needed you, they used to call, they used to call the, like we said the plumbers, they used to call the shneiders to repair the uniforms, and whoever they needed.

RL: So it was only working people?

HF: Only working people there, yes. They used to call people in to sweep the streets. They used to call people to scrape the snow from the pavements for the soldiers to walk so they don't slip. If you didn't do it properly you would get a hack, we fortunately we didn't do anything like that, we were lucky because we were working as a Wasserleitung
Tape 2: 11 minutes 9 seconds

installator for the Wehrmacht and Gestapo. And though I was 14 years old I was working just the same because I knew the trade, I grew up in it, so I knew the trade so I used to go out as well, until I went to Wehrmacht Strada as a youngster, 14 year old, and I fixed for them. They were surprised that a young boy like that could work like a man, and there was nothing too heavy. When anything heavy had to be done I used to call my brother to give me a hand with it, because some jobs was impossible for one person to do because, like central heating, the radiators were 2 inches thick, double thickness, the pipes were 2 inches. We had to do it a different way altogether from now, but we were well treated sometimes by the Wehrmacht, Gestapo, Gestapo, didn't even interest. Whatever we had to do we do, and out as quick as possible.

RL: Did you work at all...?

Cameraman: Can I just adjust this, I think there is a loose connection ... that's it ... a bit of interference was coming through.

RL: Did you work at all alongside non Jewish workers?

HF: No, no. We were not allowed to mix, wherever we worked we worked by ourselves. All the work we had to do we had to do as a Jewish people.

RL: And were you guarded whilst you worked?

HF: Only in assessed place, in assessed buildings where we had to go, there was always a guard there and we were watched, all our movements, sometimes naturally you went there you were working, your hands were frozen and you had to go to the toilet, and when you told the Gestapo you wanted to go to the toilet he told you where to go and he went with you. And you had to leave the door open, to see you use the toilet and you weren't doing something else there, that is how strict the Gestapo was, but not the Wehrmacht, some of them were decent people.

RL: Did you work every day?

HF: Sometimes we did, sometimes we didn't. Sometimes unfortunately we had to go out on Shabbos to do work as well, because we were called out on Shabbos if they had a burst, so we had to go and repair it. They didn't believe anything, to them there was no Shabbos, there was no Sunday, we worked all the time, but very rare were we called out on Shabbos.

RL: Do you remember what the street was that you were living on at this point?

HF: The street was named Popczesna, but right now I believe it is changed completely it was rebuilt completely that side of Nowy Sacz, but I remember very, very well.

Tape 2: 14 minutes 40 seconds

RL: What was the street that your parents lived on before they moved?

HF: Ulica Sobieskiego 22 and I was, the apartment was number two on the first floor.

RL: For how long did life go on like this in the working ghetto? How long did that go on for?

HF: That went on from September 1942 when the segregation was in town.

RL: And what happened at that point?

HF: At that point we were segregated, men and women. We were taken down to where the two rivers joined together, on the ground there, and we were separated from women, boys from 14 to 35 were sent back to the working class ghetto and the rest were stuck there. The same thing from the frummer side of the ghetto, the same thing broke down, and they stayed there, it was a big place that was there, and though we were sent back to the working class ghetto you were not sent back to your own house You were sent back anywhere, they put you in any building at all that they could there. There was one building of two stories, every room in that building was taken up by five/six people, six men I should say, and girls as well, separate, and we stayed there two nights, and during the two days and two nights we heard shooting, we didn't know what was happening, after two days we were called out, "Stand Up". I have to have my wife here because she helped me through it most of my life, since we got married, when we were called back in groups of ten we were told to go to certain places and when we were told to go there all we were seeing were big ditches, we didn't know what the ditches were for, and the ditch that I was sent to, I was sent with people that were older than myself, there were a couple of 14 year olds, 15/16 year olds, and the rest were older people, 35, they knew me, they knew my family. And we stopped there, and the wagons came in towards us and when they dropped the flap down the first person that came out, was my mother, and my sister with a three month old baby still alive, and I wanted to jump into the grave with them. They were shot. And they grabbed me, the people that I knew, they grabbed me, by the collar, and two of them sat on me all the time until they were buried, and that memory I have got with me until this day, and thanks to my beloved wife, she helped me, for many years, many years of suffering to get through it so I can talk about it now. And that was my mis ... misfortunate ... of seeing ... my mother being shot, and my sister with the baby still alive, and I can remember that for many years my wife helped me, to get the dreams that I had, crying, night after night, for many years, thanks to my wife I can speak to it now.

RL: So were you meant to cover the graves?

Tape 2: 19 minutes 10 seconds

HF: That is right, but they wouldn't let me, they just sat on me, they changed over, they shovelled the earth on the graves and the rest sat on me, and those who weren't sat on me carried on filling the graves up. When I went to Poland with my wife in 97, for the first time, I was looking for the Beis Olam, the Beis Olam wasn't in the same place, it was in a different place altogether, and there was a Yiddisher fellow there, Mr Muller, who lived in Nowy Sacz for six months, but through him he gathered all those people, all those dead, graves that were on the banks of the river, he guarded all those skeletons and he buried them on the Beis Olam, and he found two graves of Rabbonim from the old cemetery, they were still standing, and he dug them up and he put them in the new Beis Olam, and he put a building round them so that nobody touched the Matzeva. He put wire surroundings around it and he was there every six months and also one of the goyim went to him. Naturally he couldn't go to Nowy Sacz until the Russians left Nowy Sacz and he was presented with a small children's Sepher Torah that one of the Polish fellows had hidden and he asked the landlord where he lived, if he can build something in the foreground, in the back yard, we call it the back yard but it is a different thing altogether in Poland, so he said take as much as you want and do what you want with it. He built a small Shul there, he built an Ark with a Sepher Torah in it. He got in touch with Rabbonim in New York, they came over to Nowy Sacz and they put a Mezuzah on the building and they put blessings on it, and now anybody that goes to Nowy Sacz can go in there and look at it, it is still there, and when I spoke to Mr Muller he said, "Sometimes I get ten people, sometimes more on a visit here, that had relations who lived here before the war, but they live in America, so they come to see it." He said, "Sometimes I have a minyan here, but very rare." And he took me to the Beis Olam and he showed me what he had done, from all the graves that he dug up he made one large grave and he put a Matzeva in front of it to say what it is, who they are, and also, I don't know who it is, who it was, from America, when you open up the gates to go to the Beis Olam, they put a Matzeva there, to commemorate those who were killed in 1942.

RL: How many were killed?

HF: About 10,000 people in Nowy Sacz.

RL: In those few days?

HF: No, altogether there were about 10,000 people, but they kept from 14 to 35, I can't imagine how many, but quite a lot, because when we were sent to the camps, there must have been roughly about 1,000, 2,000 people left, that is from 14 to 35, and the first camp I was sent to ...

RL: Can I just ask you, so after you witnessed that terrible scene, what happened then?

HF: We were sent to different camps. I went to a camp Mielic, near Rzeszow, and I was working for the aircraft company building wooden frames for aircraft.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 19 seconds

RL: How were you selected to go to that particular camp?

HF: I beg your pardon?

RL: How were you selected to go to that particular camp? How was it organised?

HF: It was organised that 14 to 16 year olds were sent to that camp. Not only from Nowy Sacz, people from Rzeszow as well came into it, because the camp was near Rzeszow. Rzeszow was a very big Yiddisher community there.

RL: So were you separated from your brother at that stage?

HF: I was separated from my brother and brother in law completely. There were in different places completely.

RL: Where were they sent?

HF: They were sent to different to camps. But when the Russians were coming to Mielic, near Rzeszow, we were sent to Dachau, that is where I met first my brother and my brother in law, I could talk to them. We got on with each other, but we only stayed a week, from there we were sent to different camps, I was altogether in seven camps, the last one was Flossenbergl.

RL: Right we will go through it step by step. So, the first camp that you went to, can you describe the conditions there.

HF: The conditions were very, very strict. We had an order to fulfil. Eight frames every week, we had to do them, and there was only 1,000 boys and 500 girls in that camp, and that is why I have got the KL, that is what we got in Mielic, instead of a number we got that, as far as I know there are about two or three people with KL, one I found out only recently, neighbours who moved in here, her grandpa has got one in Belgium. I asked her his name, she wouldn't tell me, I don't know why, she is very strange that way. She won't talk about her grandpa.

RL: How were you living? What were you living in?

HF: In barracks, we were living in barracks, on three tier, what its names, and, we were divided into shifts, we were working 12 shifts at day and 12 shifts at night, and those working days they were in one barrack, and those working nights were in another barrack. The girls never worked at nights, they only worked days, and what the girls used to do was the job that we were doing, they used to smooth it off, with the sand paper, all done by hand, and we had to do it and we had done it and every week there was a big

Tape 2: 27 minutes 50 seconds

transport plane, eight engine, and we used to carry on taking the frames into the plane and the Germans, soldiers that were with the plane, air force I would say, not soldiers, they were stacking them. They were taking them from us, they were stacking them in the plane, so they won't fall down, they won't break. They used to come every week, regular, and we had to have eight frames done, if there were only seven done, not eight, we used to get beaten about it.

RL: How many days a week did you work?

HF: Seven days a week. There was no day off, there was no rest day, we had to work and work all the time. Fortunately for me I was one of the younger ones, when they used to say, I was on the day shift all the time.

RL: And how were you treated at work?

HF: We were treated, rough, more than anything else, we were allowed two meals a day, which for one was bread, and a plate of soup, that was in the evening, in the morning we used to get bread with the coffee. Coffee was ersatz coffee, you didn't taste the coffee you tasted the hot water with colour in it. The same with the soup at night, if you seen a cabbage leaf, you were lucky to see it, and that was our meals.

RL: Who oversaw the work? Who was in charge of you at work?

HF: We had engineers supervising it, civilian engineers supervising us but we also been overseen by the Wehrmacht, they were all the time there the soldiers, were all the time there. Civilians at the beginning, they taught us what we have to do but after that they looked at you to check that we are doing the right thing. But they never once hit anybody, the civilians, but the soldiers sometimes, the way that ... if they had a bad night they used to come in and oy gevalt, they were schreying, sometimes I was fortunate, I never been hit in that camp.

RL: How far away was the barracks to the work?

HF: Walking distance, walking distance. I don't think it was more than five minutes, it was part of the working, part of the barrack, part of the camp, surrounded with wires, all the lot, the only part that was not surrounded by wires where the planes came in, we had to go out to it, that was the only place.

RL: And what were the sanitary conditions like?

HF: A hole in the ground. We used to clean it. If we ever could spare the time we used to clean it. If we had the time, we used to pour the water down, but that was only a thing, we had to get used to it.

Tape 2: 31 minutes 40 seconds

RL: And did you wear any special clothing?

HF: They supplied us with, white and blue stripes, or white and black stripes depends, that is what we wore all the time.

RL: So what was that, what exactly was it?

HF: Just plain material, trousers and top, nothing else.

RL: So did you have to give your clothes in?

HF: No, you wore them all the time. You had to wash them yourself, when you can, when you finish your shift, if you had the time, and the weather was warm you washed it, you hanged it up to dry, you walked naked, you had nothing else to wear, fortunately we were separated from the girls and we were not bothered, but at that time, we never thought about things like that.

RL: And were there roll calls?

HF: Six o'clock in the morning there was a roll call. Half past six in the morning we got the cup of coffee with the bread. At 7 o'clock we started working, seven till seven at night.

RL: Did you have a break at all during the day?

HF: We had a break of ten minutes during the day. It was about 1 o'clock. The whistle went, and you put your tools down and you relax yourself, or if you wanted to stand you stand up, if you were sat too long you stood up, and if you were stood up too long you sat down, we just swapped places with them, but only ten minute we had breaks.

RL: Did you have any refreshment? Did you have any food or drink during the day?

HF: No, none whatsoever, no, not even a drink of water, if you asked somebody that you wanted to go for a drink of water you were told , "No, it's not your time until 7 o'clock."

RL: And then at 7 o'clock at night?

HF: That is when we got a plate of soup and another 4 oz of bread, black bread, that I don't know if they made it with sawdust mixed in it, that was our meal.

RL: After that?

Tape 2: 34 minutes 17 seconds

HF: Nothing. That, half an hour after your meal you were called to a roll call again and then back to your barracks to your place, and you were very watched at nights, the lights were on all the time on the barracks, not in the barracks, the lights were switched off in the barracks at half past eight, and after that there was no light, just spot lights from outside.

RL: Was there someone in charge of your barracks?

HF: We had a kapo in every barrack. An older person, that looked after, were supposed to look after us.

RL: What was yours like?

HF: At the beginning he was alright, later on he was getting rough, it wasn't his fault, it is what he was told to do.

RL: What kind of things?

HF: If somebody was lagging, walking slowly towards a roll call, he used to run behind and hit them behind on the tuchas as we say, he wouldn't hit them anywhere else because he knew that he himself was a Yid, but that was what he had to do. He was working with us just like anybody else but that was his group, he had to look after the group, that was his barrack, he had to look after the barrack.

RL: Did he have any special privileges for doing that?

HF: No.

RL: For doing that.

HF: No, nothing at all. He was just like ourselves, not privileged, just the same as we did.

RL: What happened if someone was ill?

HF: G-d help you, if you were ill you never come out. There were no doctors there.

RL: Did it happen?

HF: It happened once or twice as far as I can remember. Older people, caught pneumonia in winter and we never seen them, only two or three people as far as I remember, and it happened in my barrack and the next barrack, and of course the whisper goes round, then we heard that one of the fellows in the other barrack was beaten by the

Tape 2: 37 minutes 2 seconds

Gestapo, because, what he did we don't, we never found out, but we found out that afterwards that they beat him so much that they killed him.

Wife in background: (muffled voice)

HF: No that was another place.

RL: We are just on the first one at the moment, yes.

So how long were you in this particular camp?

HF: Until the Russians started coming near.

RL: What date was that, approximately?

HF: Approximately the end of 43 I would say.

RL: The end of 43, so really you were there for over a year.

HF: Over a year, well over a year.

RL: Yes. Were there ever any attempts of escape from there? Did anyone ever try to ...

HF: Impossible ...

RL: Nothing, no ...

HF: Impossible, because there were guards outside with dogs as well.

RL: How did you all get on together with the barracks and work?

HF: We got on very well, because we knew each other, we knew everybody from home, and those people who came from other places, we got to know them as well, a Yid is a Yid, so we carried on together.

RL: Did you try to help one another?

HF: We did, and those who could help, helped, for instance, with me being what I was trained at, by my firm, tools were known to me, I knew how to use them, and I used to show other people how to use them at the beginning. Afterwards they all knew, they got used to it, but the main thing is, like myself, and quite a few besides me that knew how to use tools, they used to help others if they got behind with the work. We would finish our place, our things quicker and then would help them finish theirs, so we always helped

Tape 2: 39 minutes 21 seconds

each other, we were one group all the time, until we left Poland and we started going from one camp to another, from Plashov, from Mielic we went with a transport to Wielichka just outside Krakow. We stayed in a train there, overnight, and no, we stayed there three nights on the train, three nights we stayed on the train, then we waited to get through to the other camp, we went past, through Birkenau, we stopped in Birkenau as well, and we carried on from Birkenau, from Birkenau we carried on, I don't know how we got through eventually to Dachau.

RL: Did you stop off, did you get out at ...

HF: No, no ... we were on the train all the time, and we were supplied with food once a day on the train.

RL: How many, what kind of train was it?

HF: Closed in trucks.

RL: And how many were in your particular..

HF: There could have been about 50 of us in one truck, because we found out later that not only Mielic group were in the trucks, but also other ones were joined in afterwards from other camps and we finished up in Dachau, and we stayed in Dachau for two to three weeks before we were transferred by different camps to Mielic, to Flossenberg, sorry, to Flossenberg.

RL: Did anybody die during that journey?

HF: Yes, quite a few did.

RL: People in your particular ...

HF: Yes, and when we stopped before we went to another camp, wherever we stopped they opened the doors and they looked inside, and whoever was dead they just threw them out. And we don't know what happened to them after that, that was the only thing we could see. But, when we got to Dachau the first time, I met my brother who was five years older than me and my brother in law as well, and we had seen each other for the first two days, and then from Dachau I was transferred to Flossenberg.

RL: Now whilst you were at Dachau, what did you, what happened to you whilst you were there?

HF: While I was in Dachau, the barracks were not segregated there yet, with wires you could walk from one barrack to another, and at that time my brother and my brother in law were there, but one time, I don't know what happened, the Gestapo came running

Tape 2: 43 minutes 8 seconds

after me, because I was late for roll call, they hit me with a rubber truncheon filled with lead, even today I have got a dent in my head.

Wife in background: Harry, he said you were cheeky to him ...

HF: And you can see, you can feel that, you can feel that dinch yourself, here ...

RL: I can see, yes

HF: And that, they hid me, for three weeks, somebody else from another barrack came in for the roll call ...

Wife in background: He was bleeding for three weeks.

HF: I was bleeding, I was unconscious for two or three days, when I became conscious I slowly managed to come out to the roll call, but fortunately we didn't do any work at that time, until we got back to our transport at Flossenberg, and when I got to Flossenberg we got examined by Austrian people, because they were in charge of the barracks and he saw my head, they saw the crack in my head and put a bandage on it, I had the same bandage all week without changing over and I still get big headaches from it, even now, after so many years, and every time I go here to hospital for x-ray they think I have got a plate put in my head.

RL: Had it broken your skull?

HF: I don't know.

RL: They can't tell from the x-rays?

HF: When they x-ray my head, my wife can verify it ... they are always asking me ...

Wife in background: (can't hear what she said)

HF: ... have I got a metal plate in my head.

Wife in background: They came running out, the nurse came running out and they said what is in your husband's head, and oh and there was also some dye or something as well ...

RL: So really, so all the time that you were in Dachau you were recuperating from this blow, and that was done in Dachau ...

Wife in background: I thought it was when you were in Flossenberg ...

Tape 2: 45 minutes 50 seconds

HF: No, Flossenberg was alright, that was the ...

RL: I am sorry, just to clarify, you say that somebody else from another barrack took your place in roll call whilst you were unconscious.

HF: They had a roll call first, so he had to go behind the barracks to take my place, and every day, a different person from a different barrack covered for me when I was inside barrack trying to come round.

RL: Where did they hide you?

HF: They hide me, behind, behind the sleeping compartments, right in the corner, in the corner, I was half laying, half sitting, against the wall, covered with a straw, like the straw fell out from the bunks, on top of me, and they used to come in twice a day, and through that, I was hit in the head, afterwards sleeping on the straw I lost my hearing.

Wife in background: perforated ...

HF: Perforated drum in the right ear, with the straw, with the straw, I found that out when I came to England that is why I have got a hearing aid.

RL: So you were in Dachau for three weeks?

HF: Three weeks, yes, and then we went back, I won't say back, we were transported to Flossenberg to carry on working for Messersmidt.

RL: And how where you transported?

HF: By train, same train that we came in by as far as I could gather.

RL: And how long was the journey?

HF: The journey was about three weeks.

RL: On the train?

HF: On the train.

RL: And how did you manage over those three weeks?

HF: Over those three weeks we were supplied with one meal a day, which you can't call a meal. Four ounces of bread and a plate of soup and that was it.

RL: Did you have to get off the train for that or was that ...

Tape 2: 48 minutes 28 seconds

HF: No ...

RL: ... given on ...

HF: That was given on the train. They used to call out the first, second, third, by numbers they used to call us out, and that was how we got fed and we used to go in the circle around all the time until everybody had their meal.

RL: That was in the actual truck.

HF: Yes, in the truck.

RL: And they brought it up to you.

HF: Yes.

What they did, they carried, two soldiers were carrying the canisters, the big canisters, like milk churns with the soup, two of them were carrying that and another had a basket with bread in, and they gave you a label for soup and a slice of bread, and that was what you had, until you got to Flossenberg.

RL: What about sanitary?

HF: There was no sanitary, a corner of the wagon.

RL: Was there a bucket or anything?

HF: Nothing, we made a hole in it, in the corner we made a hole ourselves and we used that for sanitary, but the smell was still there. Imagine you had been through one, two, three transports, you got used to things like that.

RL: Did people die during that journey?

HF: They did, and mainly the older people, starvation, also sickness, and we usually found out, eventually, afterwards, who passed away and when they passed away, but we had no, there was nothing to do about it, we couldn't do anything at all.

RL: Was it all men on this train?

HF: On this train it was all men.

RL: And what happened when you arrived in Flossenberg?

Tape 2: 50 minutes 40 seconds

HF: When we arrived in Flossenberg we got off the train and every wagon, we had to stand in front of every wagon, and eventually they counted us and we had to walk to the barracks from there. And then we were taught that we were going to do aluminium welding for aeroplanes, parts, at one time, I found out they used to bring broken planes in, specially parts of the engines with, covered with aluminium welding part of the aeroplane, and we had to dismantle the engine, and the second time I was called out to dismantle the engine I nearly lost my finger. The only way I saved that was somebody who knew a little bit about first aid, and he bandaged my finger underneath, and that is how I had to work for quite a long time, and he made sure that the bandage that he put in, every second day somebody gave a piece of shirt to cover it, to keep it clean, and I can use it thank G-d.

RL: How big was this camp?

HF: This camp was very big, because another part of the building, there were two, four, six, eight, sixteen benches, and there were two of us at each bench, and we had to work at welding aluminium. If you made a hole in the aluminium you got a zetz on the back of your head, you had to repair it, and to weld aluminium, it's very hard, I was fortunate because I used to use a blow lamp at home, for soldering, so I knew how to use it, and I used to teach them. I used to teach my friend how to use it, and we swapped over and I used to sit in the corner and I used to do my part, and when I finished my part I taught my friend how to do it, then I swapped over with somebody else, he swapped over, the other fellow came in and I taught him how to do it, because as I said, I was a plumber and I was using a torch before that, so I knew how much gas and how much air I needed to do aluminium welding.

RL: Who was supervising your work?

HF: We were fortunate; we had an Austrian engineer who was very good to us. Actually there were two of them supervising us, and every morning when we came to our benches when you pulled the drawer out for the tools we used to find a packet of sandwiches, every day in somebody else's drawer the sandwiches were there from the two Austrian gentlemen. They were engineers, they were supervising, not only supervising, at the beginning they taught us what we had to do, but they were gentlemen, very, very few those years, but those two, every day we came into our benches and we pulled our drawer out to get the tools, every day somebody else had the sandwiches, for the two people, they were very, very good.

RL: So can you just take me through a typical day in Flossenberg, you know from the time you got up?

HF: From the time the roll call was on, as I said we had a cup of coffee, mind you in Flossenberg the coffee was a little bit stronger than water, and we had a quarter of bread with a coffee, fortunately for us there was a break at about 1 o'clock where we had to put

Tape 2: 56 minutes 0 second

down the tools, switch everything off and put down the tools and sat doing nothing, we didn't have any food then.

Excuse me ... after three weeks working at Flossenberg we started getting lunches, what we called lunches was just a cup of water with four ounces of bread, because they knew that we were getting weaker and they needed us to make the parts for the aeroplane, which was vital for them, and it was vital for them also that we had the strength to work. After three weeks the break what we had, we used to get a glass of water, or a cup of water, and a quarter of bread, so we had the bread three times a day then. We were fortunate then because we were part of Austria, on the border of Czechoslovakia.

RL: How many people were doing this work?

HF: There were different parts of work. Every part, there were about two, three thousand people in that camp. Every part, every camp, every part of the camp I should say was doing a different part until eventually we built up what we were building up, the planes.

RL: Ok. Now this film is about to end, so we will just break off here.

TAPE 3

So this is the interview with Herman Frankel and it is tape 3.

So, we were in Flossenberg at the moment and you had been telling me about your work routine and the size of the camp. How was the camp guarded?

HF: The camp was guarded very, not as strict as ordinary camps because it was a labour camp. We only had wires round the camp, on three sides, one side, two sides were opening, big gates where the transport came in one gate, and the other gate we had the plane coming in for the work that we have done to take it away. And it was very, actually we were fortunate because all the overseers that we had, that we were working for, they were all Austrians, and the two that we had on our group, every morning they used to come in before we got to work, and they used to leave their sandwiches in each drawer, inside of the drawer for the two people, for the four people who worked there. Every morning they used to put them in different drawers, all 16 of us had something every time, so we had food besides the ordinary food that we had, because we needed strength there, as I said, when they brought the engine down broken to be dismantled, when I cut my finger on it, there were five, six of us, trying to lift that engine off the truck. They had no lifting machinery there, we had to do it by hand, that is how I split my thumb.

RL: Did you have any contact ... Were there any non Jews working there besides these overseers?

Tape 3: 2 minutes 32 seconds

HF: That I don't know, we never mixed, every place that we stayed and worked at, we stayed together, never mixed with anybody else. That was our place for 12 hours and that is where we sit for 12 hours, when we got to go to the toilet we had to ask one of the Austrian overseers and he took us to the toilet. And the sanitary in the camp there was fabulous, because the camp used to be the working place for somebody else before we took it over, so we had no complaints with the sanitary department there.

RL: And what were you wearing in this camp?

HF: Same thing. When we came in it. The striped uniform as we call it.

RL: What happened in this camp if someone was ill.

HF: That depends how bad he was ill. Because we had the doctors coming in there regular because they were frightened of typhus or anything like that, so we were examined, once a month or once every two, three months, that depends on the doctors when they came in, but if there were some influenza or cold then they had a doctor coming in special to see how strong it is and they give something for that so that it doesn't spread through the barrack. They were very, very good, I have always said to my friends and my wife that at Flossenberg.

Phone rings.

Wife in background: I thought you switched it off.

HF: No the answer phone is on.

Excuse me a minute ...

RL: You have got your microphone, you can't

HF: Yes I know ...

RL: You can't really ... So as you were saying about Flossenberg and the conditions three.

HF: The conditions there were one of the best conditions any camp ever had. We had no trouble with the Gestapo, we had no trouble with the Wehrmacht, actually it was the Luftwaffe not the Wehrmacht in that camp, and the overseers were Austrians and as I said before they used to bring their own sandwiches and they used to leave it in the drawers.

RL: Who was in charge of the whole camp? Who was the person in charge?

Tape 3: 5 minutes 19 seconds

HF: A Gestapo person, but he was also an Austrian. He wasn't as strict as he should have been, that is why we had it a little bit easier than in Mielic even.

RL: Do you remember his name?

HF: No.

RL: And what about the kapo in charge of your barrack?

HF: We didn't have no kapos in charge of working places, in Flossenber, we had nobody in charge. The only people who were in charge of our place were the aircraft, air force personnel, they used to call us out on, what is it called, on the morning called and they never even bothered counting, only called out to go to work and nothing else. Because we had already, we had, as we called coffee, which was better coffee than we had before, it tasted a little bit like coffee, hot water, and a slice of black bread, we had that before they came in for us, and then we walked, it was only less than five minutes to walk to the workshop.

RL: Did you ever get any time off at all?

HF: None at all.

RL: None at all.

HF: We were 12 hours a day 7 days a week, there was no time off at all, because the work that we done was part of, aluminium part, that built an aeroplane, eventually they built the aeroplane further away, the Luftwaffe themselves.

RL: Did you know what was going on in the war? Did you hear about things, what was happening in the war? Did you get any information?

HF: We used to get information via camp radio we used to call it, but we used to know from the Austrian people that used to come in, the overseers and they used to tell us where the Russian was, how far they were away. They said another 12 months time you won't be here, that is the way they used to talk to us, but very rare would they say anything like that if there was anybody from the Germans, proper Germans, because although there were Austrians there were Germans as well, and when there was anybody about then everybody didn't speak about anything. The 16 of us were in like an enclosed room, as big as this, there were 8 rows on each side and there were two tables to the workshops, two workshops to two boys at that time, and 16 of us in an enclosed place. The only thing that we had is open windows on top for the smell of the gas to go, the smell of the aluminium as well, we used to wear goggles and on some welding we used to have masks as well, on the faces, but the job, for me the job was easy because I was used

Tape 3: 9 minutes 11 seconds

to welding and I helped as many boys as I could with the welding, and they appreciated it.

RL: Were there incidents happened at all while you were in Flossenberg? Anything happened while you were there?

HF: Not as far as I can remember. The only incident that I had is myself, that I knew about, but otherwise no incident that I can remember.

RL: Were you aware at all of the Jewish calendar, of what date it was or anything?

HF: No, we lost that a long time ago.

RL: Yes, was there anyone either there or in Mielic who tried to keep up any kind of davening or anything.

HF: In Mielic yes, in Mielic yes, at the beginning, but when we got to Flossenberg we forgot all about the dates, we didn't know what the English dates were, what the ordinary calendar dates. We couldn't remember, and that was the position unfortunately, because we never had any papers, we never seen any papers, and we lost time, we just lived from one day to another and hoped for the best.

RL: How long were you in Flossenberg?

HF: In Flossenberg we were just over a year.

RL: So until what ... ?

HF: Until January 1945. We were sent back to Dachau.

RL: Did you know in advance that you were going to be sent away?

HF: No.

RL: How did it happen?

HF: Just one morning we were woken up by the Wehrmacht, not Luftwaffe and they took us out on a roll call and they marched us to the railway and we realised we were going back somewhere, maybe to Auschwitz, because we knew about Auschwitz, then.

RL: How had you heard about it?

Tape 3: 11 minutes 40 seconds

HF: We passed through Birkenau that is how. We knew about Auschwitz and we knew about what was happening there so we didn't know where we went, but after three weeks we arrived eventually in Dachau on 1st January 1945.

RL: How was that journey?

HF: Tremendous. What I mean, it was terrible actually, let's put it this way, the first day, the first day of the journey we had nothing to eat and nothing to drink. The second day when the train stopped at a siding we were allowed to send somebody out for some water from each wagon, and that is what we had the second day. The third day we arrived in Dachau.

RL: So it was three days.

HF: Three day journey.

RL: Right. And when you arrived in Dachau?

HF: When I arrived in Dachau we were put in separate barracks. The people from Flossenberg were put in one barrack, and when I came out from inside the barrack I looked around and I saw the wires, which were different to the first time that I went there, they were electrified in the centre and I am looking around and I notice my brother across in the next barrack, that is the last time I saw him, I haven't seen him since then, and we were, after three, after a fortnight, after a fortnight in Dachau we were gathered on the first march towards, as we gathered towards a Swiss border.

RL: Now first of all, how did you spend that time in Dachau?

HF: Doing nothing, nothing at all. Just morning call and night call and that was it, and when we were called in the morning we got a cup of soup, and the same in the evening we got quarter of an ounce of bread, once a day we got the bread. And in the morning we got the first march from Dachau, towards the end of January, towards the middle of January, we were going towards the Swiss border and as we were marching, whoever dropped out in the snow, they were shot and left there behind, that was day or night. At night we were told to lay down and they stood watching over us in the snow. And we heard artillery shooting from a distance where the multi explosions, away in the distance, we heard explosions so we thought maybe the Russians are coming because we didn't know America was still there, coming through, and the British, but on the 1st of April when we got to a certain place, we woke up in the morning and there was no guards, nobody at all, and then we heard an engine which we didn't recognise the sound, and we saw a small car coming up and soldiers sitting on top. We didn't recognise the soldiers, and we stood up with our hands in the air thinking they had come to shoot us and fortunately they were Americans and that is how we were liberated, and we were finished off in the little village from there called Mittenwald.

Tape 3: 16 minutes 31 seconds

RL: So you were on a forced March from the middle of January to the 1st of April?

HF: To the middle of April, yes.

RL: What happened with food during that time?

HF: Then again, very little, because there was no, the only thing that they were cooking was for them, whatever was left from them the first row used to get it, so we used to change the rows ourselves every day so that somebody else had something to eat then.

Wife in background: (muffled voice in the background)

HF: No, we started with 4,000, when we were liberated we were less than fifteen hundred.

RL: Right.

HF: We were taken to Mittenwald, Kaserne, which was American, German barracks, UNRRA came in, examined us, everyone was weighed and examined, I was 18 years old and I weighed four stone.

RL: How did you keep going during all those weeks of walking?

HF: By sheer will of power, that maybe I would live to see the end of it, but we had, we were more frozen at the beginning until the spring came in, laying on the ground, on the snow, than anything else, people were, I saw friends of mine losing his toes on his feet, I seen them frost bitten on his fingers, on the nose, dropping out completely, hoshen genig gehabt zeleben, hoshen genig, kein werfen that is the way they were talking, so ...

RL: Where you still wearing the same ... ?

HF: The same uniform.

RL: Clothing. And what did you have on your feet?

HF: If you found a pair of shoes you wore them, and if not you made your own shoes from wood and string and nothing else.

RL: What did you have?

HF: I had a pair, I made mine from wood, I have had, my wife can verify it, when I came to England I had a spoon from Dachau, from Flossenberg that I sharpened one side, the handle side I sharpened, and made myself a pair of shoes out of that from wood. Every day I used to try to cut it off, and I managed to cut it off to my size to fit me so I

Tape 3: 19 minutes 58 seconds

could tie them with a string on the side, and the string was walked off I had to look for something else and nine times out of ten you took the button off your trousers, cut it off and tie your feet around it, and that is how we survived, that is how I survived I should say. When we got to ...

RL: Can I just ask about as you were walking? Did you pass through areas, you know where, of civilian population?

HF: No, we usually went through mostly, we usually went through, I don't know how to explain, back roads, which was more with the both sides of the road with wood, trees I should say, both sides of the road. It was side road, there was no main road, and when we stopped at night they told us to lay down, where we stand. We couldn't even move together, for the warmth, we couldn't even get around ourselves to warm each other up, with a bit of heat, we had to lay where we laid, and when you got up in the morning all you saw was the shape of the snow where you laid, a little bit melted. Some were lucky, like myself, that I managed, through being younger, I managed to get through, but by the time we were finished, from 4,000 menschen, there was 1,500 left.

RL: Did anyone try to escape from the march?

HF: Yes, they were shot.

RL: Did anybody escape?

HF: Not proper. Besides they were not the Wehrmacht that were watching us, they were the Gestapo. When we woke up in the morning, before the Americans came, when we saw nobody there, we tried to look for them, and when the Americans came, one or two of us got hold of their guns and tried to run into the forest looking for the Germans, only found one, and that was enough for me.

Wife in background: What about the knife?

HF: That was knife taken from the German.

RL: What was that?

HF: I took a knife from the German and tried to kill him with it, unfortunately he was stronger than me, so he got away.

RL: This was at this time?

HF: Yes, but I have still got that knife.

RL: Right, maybe we will see it later.

Tape 3: 23 minutes 14 seconds

HF: It is somewhere in the garage, I don't think I will be able to find it.

Wife in background: You didn't get it out, did you?

HF: Pardon?

Wife in background: You didn't get it out ...

HF: It is somewhere in the garage but I am not going to look for it.

RL: Ok. So then, so you were liberated. How did you feel when you realised it was Americans? How did you feel at that point?

HF: We were, we felt relieved, specially after being examined by the doctors, and fed, proper, well they didn't feed us proper straight away, gradually, when the doctor examined us and told us the weight, we just stood bewildered because we didn't know, skeletons, skeletons. Fortunately there were five of us, we stuck together, there is only two of us left here.

Alan Wheeler, he passed away a few years ago on Christmas, his daughter found him in bed, dead.

Moshe Besserman, he went to London, he joined the ... Moshe Besserman, he went to London, he joined the Krieg family, the Krieg family, he was a ganef.

Wife in the background: He is the one who committed suicide?

HF: Moshe Besserman, he joined the Krates family.

Wife in background: He committed suicide ...

HF: Moshe Besserman we are talking about.

Wife in background: Moshe committed suicide ... That is what I said ...

HF: No, he wasn't in our group. He wasn't from Flossenberg, he was from Tarnov. He came here to Manchester, and stayed in Manchester a few weeks, a few months actually, and he went to London, and married a London girl. Because he was a little bit meshuge, after two children she slung him out. I seen him in Oxford Street, and I phoned up Ben Helfgott to come and get him, because I didn't know what to do in London. My wife's sister used to live in Croyden, so he came and picked him up, and afterwards we found out that he hanged himself. And, that was three of us.

Tape 3: 26 minutes 18 seconds

And then, Bernard, Bernard Weisenberg, er, there was a David, David Kronik his name is, he was from Vilna, a Litvak.

RL: So were you together in Flossenberg?

HF: Yes.

Wife in background

HF: Henry Alexander, and myself.

RL: And were you all on the forced march together?

HF: Yes, that is where we met, together, and we stuck together, we came to England together, through, we saw what was happening in Mittenwald.

RL: So tell me about that first. Tell me step by step.

HF: When we were in Mittenwald we saw three wagons come in one side with the food and clothing for us, and two wagons went out through the other side, there was only one wagon left, for us, what we had was food and some clothing, that is all. So we decided that we had from the same camp there was a lot more people than ourselves in that camp, there were Italians, there were, what's their name, there were Hungarians, there were some Czechs as well there, and transport was going to Italy all the time, because there were so many Italians there, so we decided we would wait there, for nothing, we decided, the five of us, we would go to Italy, with the Italians, and we would finish up in Milan

RL: So how long were you there? In Mittenwald?

HF: We were there till, pass me the certificate.

RL: How many people were there? How big a place was it?

HF: It was a very big place. That was the army camp of the Germans. It wasn't a camp; it was buildings, Kaserne as they used to call it.

Voices in the background

RL: What did you do during the day whilst you were there?

HF: Just walking about, to the town, which wasn't far, and every shop we went in, they gave us whatever we wanted, we didn't want nothing, we only wanted food, mostly. And some boys took clothes because the clothes that we were getting from there wasn't fitting

Tape 3: 29 minutes 33 seconds

us, too big or too small, or too tight or too big, so we didn't know actually what we were doing. We left Mittenwald around about July/August.

RL: 19 45

HF: 1945, with a transport, with the Italian group, to Milano and we tried to, we got in touch with the Jewish community there. Unfortunately they didn't have themselves a lot, they told us we could sleep there, but food we got to look for ourselves, and we walked into there, five of us, near Lascala, the Opera House, and we were talking in Polish between us, and we see a fellow, a soldier coming towards us, and we were taking no notice of it. We still carry on talking in Polish, and he passed us, he shouted to us in Polish, so we turned round, looking at him in uniform, we didn't know who he was. He started talking to us in Polish, we realised he was a Polish soldier, a sergeant, he asked us what we were doing there, so we told him, "We came here with a transport from Germany, and we are looking for something to eat." So he took us to the restaurant and bought us a meal, and then he started talking to us, every day he met us there at a certain time, because he was working as well there, and officers, they had a big place there, he met us every day for two weeks, and in the meantime he started talking to us, "Why don't you join the Polish army, you have food, you have clothes, you have cigarettes, you have money, you have nothing to worry about it." So between us we said let us talk it over, we can't jump in the fire. So he said, "All right, all right, I am not pushing you. I am only thinking of your own good." And between us we decided to join, and that is how we came here to England.

RL: So how did you go about joining?

HF: We went into the captain in Milan and we told him we wanted to join the Polish army. He said, "Sign the paper there." We signed the paper on the dot and we were examined by the doctor and we were sent to a unit, and fortunately for me I got a sore throat and I couldn't talk for a while, the doctor examined me and sent me to Ancona Hospital., I had tonsillitis, so I had my tonsils out in Italy. We stayed there until July 1946, we came to England.

RL: What did you do for that time that you were in the army in Italy, what were you doing?

HF: Well, we were taught different things, army duty, army training first of all. We were taught how to shoot, not only rifles but guns as well, and we were taught how to drive tractors and all the tanks in Italy, and our unit will finish off in a place called Tolentino.

RL: What was your unit?

HF: Second Warsaw Anti Tank Regiment.

Tape 3: 33 minutes 58 seconds

RL: And how did you get on with the other soldiers?

HF: There were a crowd of us. They were very helpful, they were not anti-Semitic, they were better off than some of the Yiddisher people we met afterwards, because we had met the Palestinian brigade, and we asked them, if we can come with them, and they said no, they didn't want to know anything at all, but I found out through the Polish soldiers, in a place called Fano, near Rimini, they had a small Kibbutz there, they were learning how to conserve sardines, so I went there, to see if I know anybody, I met a school friend of mine there, and I made his wedding, because I had so much money, I didn't spend any money at all, so I paid for his wedding.

RL: What was his name?

HF: Er ... Can you excuse me for a minute while I go and look at the photograph?

RL: It's alright; you can tell us afterwards, I will remind you later.

HF: I have got his wedding photograph.

RL: So where did you make the wedding? Where was that?

HF: In Fano itself.

RL: In Fano

HF: We brought an army chaplain, a Yiddisher chaplain, and he performed the wedding, all the group from the Fano, from Kibbutz there, it was only a small people, a small group, they were all together and it warmed my head up completely completely, I will never forget that. I know he, they went from there, they went to Israel, doing the same thing but he must be same age as me, or maybe 12 months older than me. But while I was there, any time I had spare time, I had free time to myself, I used to borrow a jeep and I used to go there specially, to see them, because it wasn't far from us. It was a mechaya to see Yiddisher boys and girls, working, and learning how to conserve sardines, even, some of them, some of them went on the boat to catch the sardines to bring them in, and the others were conserving them. It was a mechaye to see it, people can work for themselves, which we couldn't understand it, we were in the army, we couldn't understand it, same people who were with us in camps, they were there, working, for Palestine as we said in those years, as we said.

RL: Did you have much contact with the Italian Jewish community?

HF: Very little, very little. I had, the only contact we had was in Milano, when we were there, we were there only a few weeks, because we went, five of us, we joined the
Tape 3: 37 minutes 59 seconds

Polish army, five of us we came to England in 1946, July 1946, we finished off in Wooler, Northumberland.

RL: Which was the place?

HF: Wooler. W-double O-L-E-R.

RL: So how did you come across?

HF: I beg your pardon?

RL: How were you bought across to England?

HF: Train. From Italy straight through on the train, right across on the boat to London, England and the train went direct to Wooler, it was a two day journey, three day journey from France, and when we got to Wooler, our captain was a Yiddisher captain, and he wasn't a religious man, he didn't want to know about religion at all, he said to us right away, "I was a Yid", he says to us, "Right now I am nothing, I don't believe in anything what I have seen", he says, "but I will help you as much as I can, whenever you want to go somewhere, tell me, I will make sure you get the leave." And one day he was talking to us and he says, "Why don't you go to Newcastle, to Gateshead."

"Newcastle, Gateshead, Where's that?" We didn't know.

He said, "I will tell you what, next Friday afternoon I take you down."

"And how will we get back?"

"I will pick you up, after that you can have a jeep and go by yourselves."

So he took us to Gateshead, he left us in the middle of the street, a Yiddisher street there, and the people were looking at us, so we started talking Yiddish to them, and they realised who we were, so they grabbed us, and grabbed us to their houses, "Come to me for Shabbos, Come to me for Shabbos", they were grabbing us, we didn't know what was happening for a minute, we couldn't speak English, we only spoke two languages, Polish and Yiddish, and that is how we conversed, in Yiddish, and while we were there, we stayed there until 1947, in 1947 I came to Manchester.

RL: So where were you? Were you still in Wooler until 1947?

HF: Yes.

RL: Right. What were you doing there?

HF: Nothing. We used to go every so often on a duty what we called to Portobella Barracks, every fortnight a different group went into Portobella Barracks on duty, and this Scotch girl tried to teach us English there, and that is where my name Harry came

into, because when I said my name was Herman she said, “No, Harry” and that name stuck for me, that is why everybody knows me as Harry.

Tape 3: 41 minutes 20 seconds

RL: And did you pick up English?

HF: Me, I didn't go to school, but I picked it up.

RL: How often would you visit Gateshead?

HF: Pardon?

RL: How often did you visit Gateshead?

HF: Every second weekend, because we were on duty.

Wife in background: (muffled)

HF: I used to, speak six languages at one time, when I was younger.

RL: Which were the six?

HF: Polish, Yiddish, German, Czechoslovakian, Italian, Russian, because we mixed with them. And also, and also, the main thing I should say is Esperanto, international language.

RL: Where did you learn that?

HF: I learned that, some of it I learned at home, especially Esperanto, and Czechoslovakian we used to learn at home as well because we used to go across the border to Czech, because the border was about 15 miles from us, so we used to go there and we used to learn Czech. We used to speak to them, and we used to meet the Yiddisher boys and girls there as well and unfortunately if you don't use the language you forget, now I speak only two, three languages, English, sorry four, English, Yiddish, Polish and Rubbish.

RL: So when you went to Gateshead did you get friendly with any particular families or did you just get invited to ... ?

HF: We did get friendly with particular families because they insisted for us to come every Friday, but we couldn't get away every Friday because in the army you have got to be on duty, so every second Friday we managed to get through, and we managed to find one or two people there, and when I came to Manchester, in 1947, we were told by the captain that if we can find a job, here in England we can get released from the army and can get a permit and work in England, but we have got to get it through the army. I managed to get a job here in Manchester by the Urban Development Company, as a

plumber, the firm was owned by Mr Blane, who was also a surgeon in the Jewish Hospital, and I started working there, and I was sent with another fellow to demolish part
Tape 3: 44 minutes 53 seconds

of a bombed church, and while we were working there, one of the joiners was working upstairs, cutting the parts up upstairs, and never warned us while we were downstairs and the whole thing collapsed on us. I had a broken rib, and the fellow next to me from the navy was killed, and when I ended up in the Jewish Hospital, and every Friday morning my boss came in with my wages every week, my wages were three pounds ten shillings.

RL: What had made you come to Manchester?

HF: Because I was told there is quite a, when I was in Gateshead, they told me that Manchester has got a lot of boys here, that is why we came to Manchester, not by myself, all five of us came to Manchester, and that is how we met all the boys here, and that is why I joined the 45 Aid Society.

RL: And where were you living when you came to Manchester?

HF: I was living in Bury New Road, you are going to have a good laugh at that, 333 Bury New Road, on the corner of Dudley Street.

Wife in background: Excuse me for interrupting; 333 Bury New Road was when you married me love ...

HF: No

Wife in background: No ... you've got it wrong love ...

HF: No, that is right, I am sorry.

Wife in background: Sorry it's wrong that Ros ...

RL: Ok.

Wife in background: It is ages afterwards ...

HF: 379 ... 379 corner of Dudley Street ...

RL: 379 Bury New Road.

HF: Bury New Road, yes.

RL: Right, and that was the corner of Dudley Street.

HF: Dudley Street, yes ...

RL: And what was that? Was that ...

Tape 3: 46 minutes 56 seconds

HF: Just an ordinary bed sitters.

RL: So were you all together?

HF: No, I was on my own.

RL: You were on your own.

HF: I was on my own there ... and I was working for Mr Blane as a plumber until I had the accident, after I had the accident and I came back to myself full strength I was told to go working for a bakery, and I started working for Rosenthal and Levy on Bury New Road, on Waterloo Road ... and there I met my wife in January nineteen forty

Wife in background: eight ...

HF: Eight ...

RL: How did you meet her?

HF: In Northumberland Street, in a club.

RL: What club was that?

HF: Was it a boys club?

Wife in background: ..

HF: Didn't you read in the paper when Sam Walshaw passed away?

RL: Yes.

HF: Well he was the main leader there in Northumberland Street.

Wife in background: had lodgers there

RL: Was that a hostel?

HF: A hostel ...

RL: That was a hostel ...

HF: Yes ...

Wife in background: I taught the boys English there.

Tape 3: 48 minutes 13 seconds

RL: What was your wife doing there then?

HF: She came in to teach us English.

RL: Ahhh

Wife in background: .

RL: It isn't going to come on because you haven't got a microphone, so really it's better if you tell ...

HF: The English girls, the Yiddisher girls used to come there, looking for people from their own families, or looking ... like my wife's family were from Holland, she was looking for somebody from Holland, unfortunately there was nobody there from Holland ...

Wife in background: To take them home, to take them home ...

HF: So I took my wife home with the boys together and we started going to them, and we eloped to London, and lived in Stamford Hill ...

RL: So what was her name, what is her name, your wife, what is her name ... ?

HF: Stella Frankel.

Wife in background: No!

HF: Stella Zwop ...

Wife in background: No it isn't. Zwaap.

HF: Z-W-A-A-P.

RL: Right and where was she born?

HF: She was born in Manchester.

RL: In Manchester.

HF: She is a Mancunian.

RL: She was born in Manchester.

HF: Yes.

Tape 3: 49 minutes 30 seconds

RL: Right.

HF: And we went to London ...

RL: So how long did you go out before you eloped?

HF: Er ... November ... November 48.

RL: And what happened? Where did you go?

HF: I went to London to work in London, we corresponded and when I came back twelve months afterwards, no, a few months afterwards ...

Wife in background: You proposed ...

HF: I proposed and the parents didn't agree with me, they thought I was just a nobody because they didn't believe what I said about my family, especially about my father, G-d Rest His Soul, and they had their own firm and they employed 12 people in the season time, which unfortunately I couldn't prove it and we decided to elope, so we went to, Saturday was bonfire night, Sunday after bonfire night we went to London, we eloped to London together, and we lived in Stamford Hill, I lived on one side and my wife lived on the other side and there was a few Yiddisher people and then we decided to get married, and I went to the

Wife in Background: Chief Rabbi ...

HF: Chief Rabbi's Office and asked him about it. He said, "Certainly", if I came up with everything else, permission, especially because she was younger, if she gets permission from the family he will marry us, because she was under 21 then, and we did.

Wife in background: No, we didn't get the Chief Rabbi though ...

HF: No we didn't ...

Wife in background: He wasn't available, so we got married in the registrar, and then we had a Chuppah in May.

RL: So when did you marry in the register? When was that?

HF: January, no, sorry, February 1st 1949.

RL: And that was in London?

HF: London, yes, Islington Registry Office.

Tape 3: 51 minutes 52 seconds

RL: And then when was the chuppah?

HF: It was in May 29. (He said 29 but it must be 49)

Wife in background: Yes, that's right.

RL: And where was that?

HF: In the Rydal Mount Shul.

RL: In Manchester?

HF: In Manchester, Elizabeth Street.

RL: So you were working in London at this stage?

HF: I was working in London as a baker.

RL: As a baker ... who were you working for?

HF: Express Dairy bakery.

RL: That wasn't a Jewish firm?

HF: After two weeks I was made a foreman, because I knew more about baking than anyone else there, working here in Manchester in a Jewish bakery, naturally I knew more than they knew there, and then my wife started expecting, a baby, a first baby, and she wanted to come, so she did, she came to Manchester, and she found a bed sitter for us in Manchester. I left the job there and I came to Manchester and started working for Tip-top bakery. In the meantime I met friends of mine from where I worked before in Rosenthal and Levy, and they told me that Bookbinder, Charlie Bookbinder, was looking for a worker, so I was working for Charlie Bookbinder for 20 years.

RL: What was the job there?

HF: I was an ordinary baker ...

RL: Bakery as well ...

HF: Yes, I was a baker.

Wife in background: Twelve years of nights I had to suffer ...

HF: Twelve years of nights, regular.

Tape 3: 53 minutes 28 seconds

RL: Where was his place?

HF: At the beginning it was on Cheetham Hill Road, and then it was on Hendon Vale, and then when the council wanted the ground to build houses there, he had to completely close the bakery, and his two sons, had all the documents as bakers, they had to go to school again, one is a solicitor and one is an accountant..

Wife in background: And Elkie Brookes ...

HF: And Elkie Brookes is the daughter.

RL: So what did you do when it closed?

HF: I went to work for Mother's Pride. When we closed down I went to work for Mother's Pride bakery in Fitzwarren Street, Salford.

RL: So you kept with the bakery all the way through ...

HF: Yes, yes.

RL: Since you came, since you left the army ...

HF: Yes, well I worked as a plumber in the beginning ...

RL: In the beginning, yes ...

HF: Yes, but since I had the accident, I didn't go back, because the plumbing isn't what I was used to, because on the continent a plumber never picks up a hammer and chisel to go, to knock a brick out, that is a brickie's job, not a plumber's job. And here the plumber does everything, which I wouldn't do it, which is why I left it completely. I went to the bakery and I was happy in the bakery, I was earning good wages, I was a foreman for ten years in Mother's Pride, until I had the accident, somebody else's fault.

RL: What did happen?

HF: He was stacking bread tins on a trolley that was not supposed to be used, it had no bars on the side, and the tins were stacked six high, on top of the trolley, and he looked at his watch, and in two minutes he was going for a smoke, for a break, so the top rows, he just slung them on, you were supposed to slide them in, so they had to push the trolley

past me to the front of the oven, and as they pushed the wagon past me, two rows fell back, on my back, and dragged me out on the conveyer belt before they stopped it. I started work at 6 o'clock on the line there, on the morning goods line, and I finished off at quarter to seven, yes quarter to seven in the morning I finish off in the Hope Hospital.

Tape 3: 56 minutes 14 seconds

And that was me finished, I was 53 years old when I had the accident and I finished working completely.

Wife in background: You had a second one. No, for 12 months, and you had the second one ...

HF: That was the main one.

Wife in background: Yes, that was the main one, yes.

RL: So did you never go back to work?

HF: Not after that, no. No.

RL: What damage had been done?

HF: My spine is completely damaged. Now when I saw my specialist last year, he said my spine is leaning towards the left and I am completely and deteriorating slowly, and that is why I have got the support, surgical support, and walking with a stick.

RL: So what did you do with yourself?

Oh it is nearly ended; I might ask that later on.

So with your spine, did you get compensation for the accident?

Wife in background: (I couldn't make out what she said).

HF: I got a third of what I should have got. After waiting four years, because the solicitor advises against going to court, which we wanted to go to court. He said we won't get any more than he put it in the court themselves, we won't get any more money. I found out afterwards that we would have got three times as much as I had, but unfortunately it has gone.

RL: Now this tape is about to end, so we will just stop there.

TAPE 4

This is the interview with Herman Frankel and it is tape 4.

Can I just ask you, you have come over to England with the Polish army, what was your first impression of England?

Tape 4: 0 minute 30 seconds

HF: Very surprised, and very disappointed, because at home in Poland we didn't see dirt on the streets, we didn't see any beggars, actually there was quite a lot, we realised afterwards they were from the army, wounded, and they couldn't work, so there were quite a lot of them, so eventually I got used to it. Naturally I couldn't speak the language for quite a long time and I picked it up myself, because I used to be a linguist at one time, unfortunately I have forgotten most of the languages that I knew before, but I picked the English language quite quickly, and I managed to go to work, and the standard of work I was told to do, and I carried on like that until I met my wife and got married and carried on.

RL: What was different in England to what you were used to from abroad?

HF: It was different, like I had never seen a bus, a double decker before. The trains like anywhere else, but double deckers I had never seen, taxis I had never heard of, we never had taxis, we only had our own transport, eventually I got used to it, I seen quite a few sites, I have been to London a few times. I went to London when I was in, from Wooler, there was one time when I finished a duty in Portobello, we used to have a meal and go to bed. We had a meal and started playing cards, we started playing poker, and by the time we finished the poker on Monday morning I had one £150 and in those years £150 was a lot of money I found out, I got a lift with one of the wagons going to London and I stayed in London for two weeks, and the two weeks I stayed in London cost me £20 altogether.

RL: Where did you stay?

HF: In a hotel. I didn't know where, I seen all the sights while I was there, and I went back to the army, and I told them what I have seen and where I had been, I have seen the palace, I have seen the place, the opera houses and the museums, and I had one of the Polish people there in London show me round when they saw me there in the uniform, and I came back with £130, I went back to the camp, and I kept the money safe. And that is how I managed to get married afterwards.

RL: What did you think of the English people?

HF: Some people, some English people, depends on where you are and who you are with. The Jewish people were very friendly to us, those that survived, though we were in Polish army they were very friendly with us, and the English people didn't understand anything about it. Whatever you said anything they didn't believe it. So that, I used to say was King's Loyalty, KL.

RL: Roy, can we have a picture of it while you are speaking about it? Yes ..

HF: If somebody asks me what does that mean, I say King's Loyalty.

RL: And what did it stand for?

Tape 4: 5 minutes 11 seconds

HF: It stands for Koncentration Lager.

RL: And just remind us where that was put on?

HF: That was put on in Mielic, the only camp that had that put on. I haven't got a number on my arm, and I haven't got nothing else at all, I haven't got a number on my arm. There were two thousand boys and five hundred girls in that camp, they all had KL put on, when I came to Manchester first time I met Moshe Besserman, who I mentioned before, and he was in Mielic, we got very, very friendly, and when I got to London I met another fellow who was in a labour camp, unfortunately he emigrated to Argentina because he had family there, and Moshe Besserman after five years of marriage, he committed suicide, and then when we, in England I am the only one with it, with KL

RL: So you are saying the English didn't really understand ...

HF: They didn't understand what was happening in the camps.

RL: Did you ever try to talk about it at that ...

HF: At the beginning we tried to talk a little bit about it but in my circumstances I was frightened to talk about it because of the pain that I had suffered. I hardly mentioned about it, through my wife's help over the years of our marriage I can talk about it now, which I wouldn't talk before because I always had quite a few bad nights. My wife used to wake me up during the night and I had tears rolling down my face, crying, shouting, my hand going stiff, it is all from that, now, at my age. I can't speak honestly about it without suffering afterwards, as I said it is all in the past, and that is why I asked for this to be recorded, because I don't know if there is anybody else from Nowy Sacz, any Yiddisher people here in England or anywhere else, and that is why I wanted to put it for posterity.

RL: When you came to England did you have to register with the police? Did you have to ... as a non British subject?

HF: When I came, when I was released from the army, I had to, I had an identification card.

Wife in background: Alien.

HF: Alien. I had to go every twelve months to have it signed and stamped, when I got a job I had to go again to the police to have it stamped, when I got a new job, and I had to do that quite often until eventually they stopped it, the government stopped that.

RL: Did you ever take out naturalisation?

Tape 4: 8 minutes 58 seconds

HF: I did, in 1984.

RL: What made you decide to naturalise?

HF: Well, I always said to my wife, I want to get naturalised, not nationalised ...

Wife in background: (I couldn't make out what she said).

HF: Naturalised, but I couldn't afford it with having three children, as far as I was concerned the children and my wife come first, and they have got to be good dressed, good appearance, not just for myself, for them, they always had good clothes, they always had everything of the best. Not for me, one suit was enough for me, so I could go Yom Tov to Shul, Shabbos to Shul, but otherwise I wasn't worried about myself, many times I had three jobs in a day. I worked in a bakery, I finished at 8 o'clock in the bakery, I went to friends of mine who had handbags, I worked until 12 o'clock in handbags, I came home and had a few hours sleep and when they need me I was working in a pub, behind a bar, until 11 o'clock.

RL: Which pub did you go to?

HF: Pardon?

RL: Which pub did you work at?

HF: In Prestwich, The Wilton.

RL: So how much sleep did you get?

HF: Four hours, five hours sleep, sometimes it wasn't even that, because I was after the money, I wanted to see my children have what I had missed. What I never had.

RL: So for how many years did you have three jobs?

HF: I would say for about ten years, at least.

RL: So what were you doing with the handbags? What was that?

HF: I was framing them. I was taught how to frame them. I was working for Japinda for quite a long time, and when Japinda got taken, I was working for Berek Wurcel, and he asked me to join him as a partner, but my wife was against it, she was frightened, so I didn't.

RL: So that was in the afternoons?

Tape 4: 11 minutes 27 seconds

HF: 1956, yes.

Wife in the background: You are not saying why I was against it, are you?

HF: I beg your pardon?

Wife in the background: I was worried if the business would succeed, it wasn't very good was it.

HF: Oh, that is why you were against it.

RL: And in the evenings you would work in the pub?

HF: I was working in the pub until 11 o'clock, from 7 until 11.

RL: And then when did you go to the bakery?

HF: At 11 o'clock, I was in work at 11 o'clock, until 8 o'clock in the morning. My last job was bagels.

Wife in the background: But you had Saturday off.

HF: Naturally, a Yiddisher baker.

RL: Gosh, so where were you living after you married?

HF: We lived in a bed sitter ...

Wife in the background: No, no, first we did Elizabeth Street,

HF: Elizabeth Street.

Wife in the background: Then we went to London.

RL: So first was Elizabeth Street ...

Wife in the background: Then it was 333 Bury New Road wasn't it.

HF: Yes.

Wife in the background: He is saying that because of how he couldn't say three, so we called it "tree tree tree".

RL: So was that a flat or a house?

Tape 4: 12 minutes 50 seconds

HF: Bed sitter.

RL: And from there?

HF: My wife started expecting a second baby there, we moved into ...

Wife in the background: Hightown, Peter Street.

HF: 56, 86 Peter Street ...

Wife in the background: 86 Peter Street ...

RL: And how long were you there?

Wife in the background: Oh about 16 years ...

HF: No.

Wife in the background: We were there a long time ...

HF: No, until 1960.

Wife in the background: I can't remember...

RL: And was that a house?

HF: That was a house, two up, two down.

RL: Right, and from there?

HF: We moved into a bungalow on Sandy Lane.

Wife in the background: Ahhhhh

RL: And how long were you there?

Wife in the background: Not very long.

HF: About two years, 18 months, 18 months.

RL: And then, but my wages were not big enough to pay the ...

Wife in the background: To afford the bungalow, don't let's go there, please.

Tape 4: 13 minutes 47 seconds

RL: So where did you move from there?

HF: We moved into Thomas Street, Cheetham Hill.

Wife in the background: That's right; my parents lived near there ...

RL: And how long were you there?

Wife in the background: That was definitely 16 years.

HF: Until 1980, when I had the accident. 81 ... I moved into Warrington, in 1981 ...

RL: Why Warrington?

HF: Because I couldn't get a ground floor a flat, I was disabled, I couldn't walk up the stairs, so through the Salford Council, and Warrington new town, they worked it in, the fellow came to see me, no problem, within a few weeks we were in Warrington.

Wife in the background: A mumbled in the background – I couldn't hear what she said.

HF: We were in Warrington for four years.

Wife in the background: Was we. I didn't think it was that long.

HF: Yes, and we were very pleased to come back to Manchester, because the place was haunted.

RL: Haunted!

Wife in the background: Yes it was ...

HF: Haunted! Because all of our estate was built on a place where the plane used to crash.

Wife in the background: Burton Wood.

HF: Burton Wood Estate.

RL: So what used to happen?

HF: The cooker used to shake. The cooker used to shake, we heard footsteps in the hall ...

Wife in the background: In the kitchen ...

Tape 4: 15 minutes 18 seconds

HF: In the kitchen, you could sit in the kitchen, well the kitchen diner ...

Wife in the background: And I saw, I saw in the bathroom, I saw somebody looking at me and they darted by.

HF: My wife said she saw somebody in the bathroom looking at her and when she turned round there was nobody there.

Wife in the background: It whizzed past because I am psychic.

HF: And our daughter was living with us then, our eldest daughter, and one day, one night I should say, she was looking at the cooker when it was shaking, and her face turned to ice, you could see the icicles on the side of her hair.

Wife in the background: She saw a man at the cooker ...

HF: She saw a man shaking the cooker ...

Wife in the background: Noooooo

HF: We didn't see anybody.

Wife in the background: The cooker, excuse me, the cooker, the man wasn't there that night. We were sat, it was 10 o'clock at night, we got home, and we looked at the cooker and it was shaking, what she saw was a man stood at the cooker.

HF: And unfortunately they nearly lost me as well.

Wife in the background: Oh yes ...

HF: I don't know who, why or how, somebody or something, got hold of me, and tried to drain me at that place.

Wife in the background: I will tell you and then you repeat it, right?

You had to go to bed.

HF: I had to go to bed.

Wife in the background: And you said, "Go away, it's not my time".

HF: And I turned round shouting, "Go away, it's not my time." And my wife came in with my daughter, and they tried to wake me up and they couldn't wake me up for quite a

Tape 4: 17 minutes 31 seconds

long time. Eventually, my wife came into the bedroom with a flannelette, cold water and washed my face and woke me up.

Wife in the background: No, Simone and I stood, Simone and I went to the front door, and shouted very loud, "Go away, we don't want your presence."

HF: My wife opened the door, and shouted, with our daughter, "We don't want you here; we don't want your presence." I believe that place was haunted very badly.

Wife in the background: And all the others left as well, a brick wall came down opposite.

HF: Completely, the things that was happening on that estate was unbelievable, people were coming and going left right and centre, that is why we left, and just before we left a couple emigrated to Australia to their family, the other couple went to Little Hulton, to their family, and the third couple that we knew, unfortunately he had a heart condition and he passed away there, because he couldn't carry on any more, he couldn't drive, he couldn't do anything, from the environment, from the bad environment, all the place there, everybody was leaving.

I believe now they rebuilt completely the place, what they had to do was demolish all the houses, dig it further down, as far as they could, and take whatever they could, take it out completely, and rebuild the estate completely.

RL: So where did you move to?

HF: We moved to Thomas Street in Cheetham Hill.

Wife in the background: No Moxley Road.

HF: Yes, sorry, Moxley Road.

RL: Crumpsall?

HF: Yes, round the corner from here.

RL: And how long were you there for?

HF: 15 years, too long.

Wife in the background: 16 ...

HF: The house, there were two houses made into flats, there were six flats there, you couldn't get one night's sleep. Everybody coming in two or three in the morning, slamming the front door.

Tape 4: 20 minutes 13 seconds

Wife in the background: We were number one.

HF: We were number one and everyone was ringing our front door thinking that we were the carers, the caretakers. Enough is enough, so we come here, and we have been here now ... what? Three/four years?

Wife in the background: I don't know, how long have we been here, three years?

HF: Three or four years.

Wife in the background: We are settled now I think.

RL: Right.

HF: This place is good, we have got peace and quiet in this place.

RL: So when you first came to England, did you ever think of moving on to any other place? You know moving on to another country?

HF: Yes, I did. At one time I was thinking of going to Australia, to New South Wales, with my wife and children, but my wife wouldn't budge from her family. So we stayed in England.

RL: And what about before you met your wife? Were you hoping to move on?

HF: Well I had, I was, I was sent an affidavit from New York from my family who I have never met, the name is Kassner, and they wanted me to come over, but in the meantime I met my wife and I stayed in England.

Wife in the background: It's my fault!

RL: What about Israel?

HF: Well, it is my one and only wish, to go to Israel to see Yad Vashem. But the way I am right now unfortunately I can't afford it.

RL: Have you ever visited ...

HF: Israel? No ...

RL: Never visited.

HF: Never, as you can see for the last 24 years I have been disabled. And 24 years is a long time, but keine hora, I am still here to tell the tale.

Tape 4: 22 minutes 24 seconds

RL: So after the accident and you had to retire from your work how have you kept yourself busy? Have you done anything?

HF: I kept my mind occupied by reading a lot. And doing shopping for my wife, and helping as much as I can, but I have to occupy myself, because I couldn't believe that at 53 I would never work again. I was always a hard grafter, always worked hard, I never had, while I could I never had a day off work, I worked for Charlie Bookbinder for 20 years and the only time I had was Yom Tov, I never knew of holidays, well I knew of holidays but I couldn't afford them because I had three children to bring up, I was thinking more of the children, my own family, than myself, but I got used to it, it took me a long time, it took me a hell of long time to get used to it that I would never work again. I was 53. I would say about two, three, around about three years before I settled down ...

Wife in the background: It was longer than that Harry ...

HF: No, three years, before I settled down and realised that I wouldn't work again, it was a hard thing to do, specially when you are a hard worker and sometimes you had two three jobs, and you had never been frightened to work, you never had to go to anyone else, helping.

Wife in the background: And your son takes after you, doesn't he ...

HF: And I have explained, how I explained to my children the same thing, if you have got a job, keep it, never throw dirty water before you get clean water. Never look for something better when you have got something good.

Wife in the background: But Harry, your son, Michael, takes after you, doesn't he.

HF: Yes he does, but anyway he does take after me as a worker, that is the only thing I can say about him.

RL: Which Shul did you join when you came to Manchester? Did you belong to any congregation?

HF: At the beginning we used to go, with my in laws, Oleh Vashalom, we used to go to the Spanish and Portuguese Shul.

Wife in the background: Cheetham Hill Road.

HF: Before the museum was made, and then I started going to Cheetham Congregation, Cheetham Hebrew Congregation, now in the, Bernard Stone, the president is a very good friend of mine.

RL: So are you still a member of that?

Tape 4: 25 minutes 40 seconds

HF: Yes.

Wife in the background: We are both members.

RL: Did you join any other organisations?

HF: Only 45 Aid Society.

RL: When did you join that?

HF: When I came to Manchester and I met the boys.

RL: Right, right.

HF: Laski House and Northumberland Street, and I joined, not long ago, I joined AJR as well.

RL: When did you join that?

HF: It must be about five or six years.

Wife in the background: (mumbled voice in the background)

HF: Don't give me that, when we lived in Moxley Road. Ruth came over, and that was the first time I met her, Ruth Firestone, because I know her father very well, Frank, my solicitor. That is where I met her, that is how I joined the AJR.

RL: Have you been a member of any other group? Or any Zionist group?

HF: The only, while I was working I was a member of the baker's union, I had to be, otherwise you couldn't get a job in bakery.

RL: Were you interested in politics?

HF: No. There is two subjects that never get me going out. That is politics and sport.

Wife in the background: And religion.

HF: Oh, and religion.

Wife in the background: That is very important.

Tape 4: 27 minutes 17 seconds

HF: I never get into those three subjects, whoever you talk to about it, it always come arguments afterwards, I never take the subject up of politics, I never take the subject of sport and I never take the subject of religion, because there is always arguments on either side and I keep away from it because I want a peaceful life. It is the best way, to have a peaceful life is not to argue about things that you don't want to know about, people start arguing over nothing, immaterial things, it doesn't bother me, I keep away from things like that.

RL: Were your religious beliefs affected by what you went through in the war?

Wife in the background: Yes ...

HF: Yes, of course.

Wife in the background: The first thing word said to me, "I don't believe in G-d", do you remember? She can't hear me.

HF: At the beginning when I came over here, I didn't believe in G-d. After what happened to us, after what happened to me especially, witnessing losing my family, the way I witnessed it, I didn't believe in G-d for quite a long time, I didn't want to know anything about religion, I didn't want to know anything about anything at all after what I suffer. Eventually, I came around, slowly I came around.

Wife in the background: I turned you round ...

RL: What helped you to come around?

HF: My wife, bless her. She helped me to come round, it took a long time, after what I suffer, seeing my family, my mother G-d Rest Her Soul, my sister with her three month old baby still alive, buried, in a mass grave of 100 people, there were about 15 or 18

graves like that, when you see it like that, when you are 14 years old, 15 years old, it sticks in your mind that, and you cannot forget things like that.

RL: How do you feel towards G-d today?

HF: I wouldn't say I am very close to G-d, but I still believe in the religion. Which is more important, if you believe in a religion, you believe in something, if you don't believe in it, you don't believe in anything. But as I said, it took me a long time to get back to it.

Wife in the background: Yom tov, you say that it happened on Yom Tov, what you witnessed, because you had trouble on a Yom Tov, didn't you, for years.

Tape 4: 30 minutes 32 seconds

HF: For years, I had trouble with going to Shul, I wouldn't go Yom Tov to Shul, because what happened in Poland in September 1942 was Rosh Hashona/Yom Kippur. So I wouldn't, I just couldn't, I stayed at home and cried my eyes out. Every Yom Tov, for quite a long time thanks to my wife's help, I came through, and now can go to Shul.

Wife in the background: You disappointed the children, didn't you, we used to get them ready and everything.

HF: I have disappointed my children, by not going to Shul.

Wife in the background: Well I took them.

HF: My wife took them, with her parents, G-d Rest Their Souls, and eventually I took them myself, but I had to be convinced, somebody had to put me on the right track, and that person is my wife. G-d bless her for it. Through her help I went through, because you can't forget things like that. It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter what you are doing? Or where you are? That is in your mind. That has been in my mind for years and years and years. I have suffered, many nights, crying in my sleep, seeing what I saw on that day, my wife can tell you, how many times she had to wake me up, and wash my face with cold water.

Wife in the background: Pulling your hair out?

HF: How many times she stopped me pulling my hair out from my head, because my left hand usually went to my hair and my right hand was stiff as a poker, I don't know why, just one of those things that you don't go into, because when you start going into them it can drive you meshuga completely.

Wife in the background: While you're under your tears just flow down, don't they, while you're under ...

RL: In terms of coming back to the religion, how far back would you say you came? Have you reached the point you had been or not quite?

HF: I would say about five or six years of being married. It must have been about that time, because I had the visions, all the Yom Tovim, I had the visions of what had happened, you couldn't forget things like that, I still now, now and again, I still have them as well, but I am 77 years old now. I was in London not so long ago, it was a couple of months ago even, when I had the last bad dream.

Wife in the background: Nightmare, nightmare, it's not a dream it's a nightmare.

HF: Nightmare more than anything else, seeing what I saw when I was 14 years old.

Tape 4: 34 minutes 6 seconds

RL: So now, in terms of observance. How far back do you think you came in terms of observance? Are you at the level that you at, say were in Poland? Or is it different now?

HF: Different completely. Because I am in a different environment here to what I was at home. When I walk from here to Shul. I walk into Park Road, it takes me three times to stop, to take an inhaler before I can carry on. The same coming home. The Rebbe knows. When the Shul was down Cheetham Hill Road I used to go by car and leave the car round the corner. And I told the Rebbe about it, it doesn't matter, as long as you are here, that is the main thing, never mind the car. That is the only way I could go to Shul, and that was more important to me than anything else.

Wife in the background: You can't do it with this one can you ...

HF: I can't, I daren't ... I stop three times on the road to take the inhaler, which is worse for me, so alright I get there half an hour later to the Shul, so it doesn't matter, if I am in bed for the rest of the day, that is the way the Almighty looks at me as well, he gives me probably, he will give me forgiveness for it, because I do go, and our Rebbe, he knows all about it, he told me to forget about it, to do my best, as soon as I put my foot through the door I am there, he says, "Thank G-d." I showed my face, he knows my situation, he knows well. He knows me from, he knows me for many years, so he knows how I feel about it. Last year, unfortunately, I took bad on Rosh Hashanah, in the Shul, he sent me home. He came to me himself, I don't know how he knew, he came to me and tapped on the shoulder and said, "Hersch, gay heim, bis krank." You can't argue with the Rebbe.

RL: Who is that? Who is the Rebbe?

HF: He is Canadian, I forgot his name. He is a Canadian Rebbe, he has got a big family here as well, kneine hora, but he is fantastic, he's fantastic. He comes from, I think Montreal, this side of Canada. When I first met him I said, "My daughter is in Vancouver."

He said, "Oy, she is 3,000 miles away from me." The country is so big.

RL: So tell me about your children. We haven't really discussed your children properly. Go through your children and tell me when they were born and their names first.

HF: Michael was born, Michael, his name is Avraham Myer, but his English name is Michael Anton.

RL: Was he named after anybody?

HF: He was named after my father, G-d Rest His Soul, Oleh Vashalom.

Tape 4: 37 minutes 59 seconds

RL: And when was he born?

HF: November 6th 1949.

RL: And the next one.

HF: Simone Maxine. She was born February

Wife in the background: Ay!

HF: Sorry, April 4th.

Wife in the background: Pardon me, January 4th, on your dad's birthday. January 4th 1951.

RL: Was she named after anyone?

Wife in the background: Yes.

HF: After my wife's family in Holland. And then the youngest one, Helena.

Wife in the background: No, you've not given her name, it's Shimon Mordechai.

HF: Yes.

Wife in the background: Simone Maxine is Shimon Mordechai.

HF: I don't know how that can be.

Wife in the background: We got permission to do it.

HF: After her Dutch family.

Wife in the background: After those who had gone, a grandfather and uncle.

HF: And the youngest one, Helena ...

Wife in the background: Helena Yvonne.

HF: Yvonne. She was born in 1953. May 16th 1953.

Wife in the background: And her Yiddisher name is Chaya Shifra.

HF: That's right, after my mother G-d Rest Her Soul.

Tape 4: 39 minutes 18 seconds

Wife in the background: They can't hear me.

RL: We can hear you in a certain sense, so it's best too ...

Wife in the background: Oh I am sorry ...

HF: You don't give me a chance.

Wife in the background: I couldn't make out what she was saying.

RL: Let him speak.

Wife in the background: But ... he is hesitating ...

RL: It's all right. We will give him a chance to speak.

HF: She was named after my mother, G-d Rest Her Soul. Lange yahren to her. Her name is Chaya Shifra, after my mother, and she lives in Canada.

RL: Where did they go to school, the children?

HF: Michael went to, they all three went in the beginning to Marlborough Road School, and then Hope Park.

Wife in the background: Helena is Hope Park.

HF: Helena and Simone went to Hope Park. No, sorry Simone went to Delamere, Simone had very bad eyesight and when she was five years old we were told that she might lose her eyesight.

Wife in the background: She is partially sighted.

HF: She is registered as partially sighted now, her glasses were made specially in Germany. So, she is the only one, and Helena went to, she was in Arnside.

Wife in the background: She went to Hope Park.

HF: What's its name not Arnside, she was in Delamere, not Arnside

Wife in the background: Who was?

HF: Simone.

Wife in the background: Yes ... and Helena went to Hope Park.

Tape 4: 41 minutes 0 second

RL: And Michael?

HF: I beg your pardon.

HF: Michael.

Wife in the background: Hayes Road.

HF: Michael went to.

Wife in the background: Hayes Road.

HF: Hayes Road.

RL: And then after school what did they do?

HF: Helena went to college, and started nursing.

Michael went to work as an apprentice chef and went to Salford Tech, he passed his exams and everything else.

RL: And Simone?

HF: Simone, she couldn't do nothing, because of her eyesight. It was very, very bad.

Wife in the background: She's ...

HF: Now she is painting.

RL: She paints?

Wife in the background: She is an artist.

HF: She is an artist now.

RL: Right, right.

HF: Only the last 12 months she started that.

RL: Right, and did they belong to any youth groups as children?

HF: They used to belong ...

Wife in the background: .

Tape 4: 42 minutes 15 seconds

HF: No, no they didn't.

Wife in the background:

HF: Helena belonged to JLB.

Wife in the background: That is where she met Michael.

HF: Yes, another Michael.

Michael didn't bother, he was rough and ready, like a boy.

RL: Have they married now?

HF: They are all married, bar Michael, Michael is not married.

Wife in the background: He was.

HF: He was married.

Wife in the background: He is divorced.

HF: He is divorced, over twenty years now he is divorced.

RL: So who did they marry?

HF: Michael married out, he married a Sandra, and ...

Wife in the background: She was lovely ...

HF: She was lovely. She still now even calls us mam and dad, and sends us birthday cards and anniversary cards, even now, and she understands a lot of Yiddisher words, you couldn't help it she understands, she picked up more than ever, but he had no respect and she divorced him, when he was in hospital.

And Simone had been to Holland for five years, and she met ...

Wife in the background: No Denmark, she met him in Denmark.

HF: Denmark.

Wife in the background: She met David in Denmark.

Tape 4: 43 minutes 44 seconds

HF: Denmark, she met David in Denmark, and they went to Holland for five years, that is where he picked up the work.

RL: Was he Jewish?

HF: I beg your pardon?

RL: Was he Jewish?

HF: No.

Wife in the background: No, but he is fluent, absolutely brilliant.

RL: What does he do for a living?

HF: Costume design, costume design.

Wife in the background: Fashion designer.

HF: Fashion designer. He makes his own fashion.

Wife in the background: Harry, tell Ros how brilliant he is in Yiddish.

HF: Oh, David, you could eat him up, every Friday afternoon he phones us here and wishes us good Shabbos. And he says proper, "Have a gezunte Shabbos."

Wife in the background: He knows a lot of Yiddish.

RL: Where did he learn Yiddish?

HF: From us, not only from us, and from other people, in university as well.

RL: Where was he born?

HF: He was born in London I think.

Wife in the background: Yes, he is a Londoner.

HF: He is a Londoner.

Wife in the background: But they are married, they are married, Simone and David, yes.

HF: They are married, yes.

Tape 4: 44 minutes 45 seconds

RL: And do they have children?

Wife in the background: No.

HF: No.

RL: They don't, no.

And then Helena?

HF: And then Helena has got three children.

RL: Who did she marry?

HF: She married Michael Cantor, CantOR I should say.

RL: And where was he from?

HF: Manchester, he was born in Brooklands Road, in a big house.

Wife in background: Was he?

RL: And they have three children, two boys and a girl, the boys were born here. Adam, Lawrence ...

Wife in the background: And Bett ...

HF: And Bett.

Wife in the background: What about Michael. You haven't mentioned your other two grandchildren.

HF: I will do in a minute.

RL: And where do they live?

HF: They live in Vancouver, Canada.

RL: And what does her husband do.

Wife in the background: Ohhhh ... bless him.

HF: 18 months ago, he and six of his workers ...

Tape 4: 45 minutes 59 seconds

Wife in the background: Employees ...

HF: Six of his friends that work for the firm bought the firm out of the boss, because the boss had three pacemakers put in and was not supposed to come to work. He was the president for quite a long time ...

RL: What is the firm?

HF: Electrical Engineering ...

Wife in the background Franks

HF: Franks Engineering.

Wife in the background: And he is the president of the company.

HF: He has been president for about ten years now.

Wife in the background: So it is his company.

HF: It is his company now; he is the ganze macher there. He built the firm up, when he started to work for the firm 15 years ago there were six electrical engineers working, now he has got 200 and he is the president of the firm.

Wife in the background: It is all the computer systems. Harry ... computers!

HF: Yes, it is all computer, what they do actually in Canada is to put big firms on computer, like Shell, Water Mills ... on site, he goes, designs everything what they want, and he puts the workers in to do it.

Wife in the background: I couldn't hear what she said.

RL: Sh, can I ask for you not to keep interrupting, because they aren't going to be able to use the tape.

Wife in the background: He has not mentioned the grandchildren though ...

RL: I am going to ask him, it's all right...

Wife in the background: Oh right ...

RL: I will ask him but it is just going to affect the tape a little.

Tape 4: 47 minutes 38 seconds

Ok, so that is the Vancouver family. And the children, how old are they now, the grandchildren?

HF: Anton is 26, sorry 28, Anton is 28 ...

Wife in the background: Michael's children ...

HF: Lawrence is 26 ...

Wife in the background: Excuse me, you are getting the children mixed up, Anton is Michael's children, Lawrence is ...

HF: Adam, sorry, Adam not Anton. Adam is 28, Lawrence is 26 and Beth will be 22 in April, in August, next month.

RL: And what are they doing? Do you know what they do?

HF: Adam is in the, electronic sales. I think he is working for paper now, on computers. Lawrence is a construction worker, he tried to get into college to do a degree. And Beth is Beth, come and go.

Wife in the background: Well, Anton and Lisa?

HF: And I have got another two grandchildren from Michael, our son.

RL: Yes.

HF: Anton is 29, he works also in computers, here in England. And a daughter he has got, Lisa, she is 28, and she also works for a firm, computer shooting for the company.

RL: Where does Michael live? Whereabouts?

HF: Northampton.

RL: Northampton.

And where does ...

Wife in the background: Nottingham

HF: Nottingham.

RL: And where does ...

Tape 4: 49 minutes 51 seconds

HF: Lisa lives in Nottingham.

Wife in the background: Lisa is Northampton, Michael is Nottingham

HF: And Anton is Colwyn Bay.

RL: Ok. And what about Simone?

HF: Simone lives in Rossendale Valley.

RL: Rossendale Valley.

HF: And now she is in Canada, looking after her sister, after she had an operation on the legs, she went there looking after the family.

RL: How aware were your children of your background, of your history, as they were growing up.

HF: They knew quite a lot of my history, as they grew older, me and my wife, mostly my wife told them more about it than I did, because they were wondering why I suffered so much, why I cried during the night, naturally. The nightmares and everything else, my wife explained to them everything. Now, now and again they asked me, but the youngest daughter in Canada, she belongs to the Second Generation in Vancouver. And she goes quite a lot, she used to, not now unfortunately, she used to go quite a lot telling my story.

RL: In terms of nationality, how would you describe yourself?

HF: International ... international.

RL: Can you elaborate a little bit?

HF: Well, I was born in Poland, my beginning was educated in Vienna, then I went back to Poland, carried on with education in Poland, until I went to the camps, and then I came to England and I started learning English here, actually I have never been to school here in England, everything is self taught, English, I read a lot of books, and mix with the people with the background. Sometimes I go to Nicky Alliance, where they want me to go more often, but I can't because my wife has just come out of the hospital, a couple of months ago, three months ago, no April, April 22nd she came out of the hospital and she can't go anywhere right now unfortunately, so I have got to look after her.

RL: In terms of identity how would you describe yourself?

Tape 4: 53 minutes 10 seconds

HF: Yiddish. I have got no other identity. I have been a Yiddisher, I can't say anything apart from that, mind you I have been called many names in my life, but that is beside the point.

RL: How do you relate to the English?

HF: Let's put it this way, comfortable, comfortable, just like a human being to a human being, a mensch is a mensch, it doesn't matter who you are with, you have got to go down to everybody's level, it doesn't matter how well you are educated or self educated, it doesn't matter how well you speak a language, you have got to go to the same level as the people you meet with, up or down, makes no difference, I get on with everybody.

RL: Have you ever met any anti-semitism in England?

HF: Only once, when I worked in a bakery in the early 50s, in Tip-top bakery.

Wife in the background: No, it was the one before that.

RL: And what happened in that case?

HF: Unfortunately the gentleman only had one eye, he had a patch over the other eye, and when he found out, he knew I was Polish, and when he found out I was Yiddish he started throwing nasty remarks at me, so I carried on for so long and I warned him to stop it, stop it. He wouldn't stop it, so I put my own revenge on him and I hit him, I nearly knocked him out. The foreman see what I had done, told the boss what I had done, who was also a major in the English army, he called me down, he asked me what happened, and I told him, I explained to him, "I am of Jewish religion, I won't be called names by anybody, I suffered through it, I have been to seven concentration camps, and nobody is

going to call me names. I am living here peacefully now but if somebody starts calling me names I take the revenge after three warnings.”

That was one, the second one was also in the bakery, he put salt in my coffee, specially. We went for a break.

Wife in the background: Tea!

HF: Coffee!

Wife in the background: I thought it was tea ...

HF: Coffee, salt in my coffee, I took one sip of coffee, because I was thirsty, sweating in the bakery, and I spit it out in his face, I didn't know it was him, so he turned round and said, “What did you do that for?” He thought I wanted to fight with him. I said, “Who put salt in my coffee?” And there were six of us around the table, so everybody

Tape 4: 56 minutes 44 seconds

laughed but him, so that was my revenge to him, I poured the coffee over his head and made a fresh one.

Wife in the background: I didn't hear what she said.

HF: Also, at the beginning, when I came to Manchester for the first time when I was going out with the boys from Northumberland Street, from the club, we went to Rialto pictures one night. As we came out from the picture, there was Jack Bulver, myself, Sam Gontash, there were about four of us altogether, and there were a whole group of boys, and I had my teeth knocked out, but we managed to get our own way back, and they just ran away. And that was the first time I really fought outside, not because of that, because they fought also because we were Yiddisher people, Yiddisher boys. We were only 18 then.

RL: So this tape is about to end, we will just stop here.

TAPE 5

So this is the interview with Herman Frankel and it is tape 5.

So, how, we have talked about how you feel towards the British and your experience of anti-Semitism. How do you feel towards the Germans?

HF: Well, I used to feel very, very bad towards Germans, in the beginning, but as you grow older you realise the younger generation can't be blamed for what the fathers and grandfathers done, so I just don't bother, if I see them I speak to them, they are human beings, because you can't blame the young generation for the, excuse me, for the, for the

things that the old generation done. You can't blame them for the holocaust, you can't blame the young generation for what happened before. Right now, it is immaterial to me, as far as I am concerned it is just a country with human beings there.

RL: Do you receive compensation or restitution?

HF: I do, yes. I get pension from Germany and it helps with everything else.

RL: And what about the Poles? What are your feelings towards Poland and the Poles?

HF: Right now, well the first time I went to Poland, after 58 years and I will be frank, I couldn't speak Polish when I went back to Poland, and I took my wife to show her where I was born, apartment and everything else, and we went upstairs to see the apartment and the old gentleman opened the door. And when I had one look at the apartment I run out quick, because everything has been altered, everything, completely, has been altered in the apartment, I couldn't recognise anything, so I never went back. I took some photographs from the outside, for a keepsake, just to show the children where we lived

Tape 5: 2 minutes 58 seconds

and we went to Krakow as well, while we were. Sorry while we were in Nowy Sacz we found the Beis Olam, I went to the Beis Olam, unfortunately as we opened the gate to the Beis Olam the heavens opened up and we got wet through. We had to go back in a taxi to the hotel, have a shower and change completely. The weather was shocking, we had to wait until Sunday. It was too late on Sunday, we had to go back to Krakow, we only stayed there for a few days. But in those few days I met, as I said before, I met two friends of mine, that I grew up with, and they were very, very friendly to me, they got hold of me, when they met me like a lost brother, Richard first, and his sister, Sophia. She grabbed hold of me more than he did, but when he saw me first he just started crying when he saw me, until now he says, "For the past 18 months I knew a Frankel would come back to Nowy Sacz." And I am the only Frankel left, so he was right, and Zophia said to me when we met, after we had hugged each other, and she wouldn't let me go, she hold on my hand, squeezing my hand, saying, "It is so nice to see somebody, from your family, that is still alive, it is like my own brother, and you are closer than he is." Well, what can I say to people like that, there is no answer to that.

RL: How long were you in Poland for?

HF: We were there a fortnight only. We went to Krakow, to Kaszemiesz we went to all the Shuls, to all the Beis Olams, we went to Warsaw, we went to Warsaw Ghetto, which I have got a present from Warsaw Ghetto, which I have got a present from Warsaw Ghetto.

RL: Can you just take?

Camerman: Will you just hold it up.

RL: Can you just explain what this is?

HF: This is a Menorah, made by Warsaw Ghetto survivors, and they are selling it to support themselves and to support the people who are left from the ghetto. Not only the Magen David, not only the Menorah, they did quite a lot of different things as well.

RL: So how did you feel, how were the general population of Poland towards you when you returned?

HF: The first time, in the beginning, it was very hard for me, for the first three to four days, speaking because I forgot the language, not speaking here in England Polish. But eventually, they were laughing at me, they said you are back to normal, you speak perfect, but I never met anybody who was against me or anything. Who said any words against me. I will tell you something, you must think it's funny, when we came to Warsaw, back from Krakow, we travelled by train, with the gap between the train and the platform, that wide, it was about two feet wide, my wife is only 4 foot 10, she couldn't get out, so I stopped a Polish soldier, and then I realised he was a captain. He was 6 foot

Tape 5: 7 minutes 10 seconds

6, asking me if he could help my wife get off the train, he lifted her like a baby and put her down on the platform. And he spoke to me in Polish, and I thanked him very much in English, and when he shook hands with me, I said to him in Polish, "dziękuję bardzo", "Thank you very much" in Polish, so he looked at me and said, "So you speak Polish?" And I said, "I have just come for the first time in 58 years to Poland." So he wished me all the very best, and hope I had a, he didn't say an "enjoyable" time, but a "healthy" time. Because he realised where I come from, and that is why. But in Warsaw, we went to Warsaw Ghetto, and we went to Warsaw Shul, and we only stayed a couple of days and came back, we were only in Poland a fortnight altogether.

RL: When did you visit? What year was this when you went back?

HF: 97.

Wife in the background: I couldn't hear what she said here.

HF: I have got photographs of it.

Wife in the background: I couldn't hear what she said here.

HF: I have got the photograph of the property that my father used to own, G-d Rest His Soul. And not only that, not only our own apartment, but he owned three quarters of the block, but unfortunately I have got no papers to claim for it, but somebody in London, has got the papers, and he is claiming it, and I can't do anything about it. I can do nothing about it because he has got the main papers, and I have got nothing to prove it, nothing whatsoever. I have enquired about it, I have been in touch with Nowy Sacz Town Hall,

and they said if I haven't got anything to prove I can do nothing about it. He has got the papers, he has got everything signed to him, so it is his.

RL: How has he got the papers signed to him?

HF: I have got no idea, no idea, I looked into it ... obviously his family must have come from Nowy Sacz and somebody found the papers in Nowy Sacz and he must have gone to an attorney or solicitor and have it signed over to him. It is a twist, whichever you like, I myself cannot prove anything at all, because I haven't got anything in black and white as we say. Everybody knows, if I go to Poland now, old people who are still alive know what used to belong to us, the youngsters who live there now don't know anything, and to go to the trouble to fight for it. It is not worth it, not at my age, it is not worth the fight, it is not worth the trouble because I will have to travel backwards and forwards all the time. It is not worth it to me, it won't make me any richer, it won't make me any poorer, so I want to have a peaceful life so I am going to forget it. The way I saw it, the way I saw they had rebuilt it completely, broke my heart enough, so what is the use of fighting for something when your heart is broken.

Tape 5: 11 minutes 12 seconds

RL: How many times have you revisited Poland?

HF: I have visited twice. I have visited the second time two years afterwards in 1999, I took my children, my children took me to Poland to show them everything, so I took them to Nowy Sacz as well, via Warsaw and Krakow, I took them to Nowy Sacz and met my old friends as well, and I took them to the Beis Olam and I took them everywhere. Every time I went there to the Beis Olam I used to say Kaddish for everybody, when my son, in Krakow, that was the worst part for me in Kaszimiesz there is another Shul, around the back there, an old Shul, so we went there to have a look, I just walked in, and I just saw inside the fireplace, where the fireplace used to be, there were children's photographs in there, and I recognised my twin cousins, and I ran out crying from there. I couldn't go back again, because that was the two cousins that lived in Krakow with another brother they had, with another brother, an elder brother, and I have never seen them since before the war. That is why I wouldn't go back to that Shul again, actually it is a museum, it is not a, it used to be a Shul, and I showed them everything in Krakow as well. I showed them Warsaw, the ghetto and everything else as well, and the two girls, whilst we were in Krakow, they went to Auschwitz, I wouldn't go, I couldn't make myself go again. And my son stopped with me, he wouldn't let me stay back by myself, so we stayed and waited for the girls to come back in the evening from Auschwitz, and we went back from Krakow to Warsaw and came back to England.

And the second time when I went back to Poland I could speak better than the first time, we used to laugh because I spoke to polish to them even than to ordinary, I am glad I could pick up my own language, as they say, "Mama Loshon". You can't carry on with it, you forget yourself, you speak it to your own children, and they speak only English, and I was speaking Polish and mixed English with it, and they had a good laugh, and they

enjoyed themselves as well. They took the mickey out of me, but they were only children, and you don't forget things like that. As long as they saw what they wanted to see, that is the main thing.

RL: How do you feel towards Israel?

HF: I am very strong towards Israel. Very strong, I would love to go, once only, I would love to go, but my wife is against it, she feels because of the trouble there, the suiciders and everything else she is frightened to go.

Wife in the background: Very frightened.

HF: Otherwise I would love to go.

RL: Have your children been? Have your children visited Israel?

HF: No.

Tape 5: 15 minutes 18 seconds

RL: No

HF: No, neither of them. One lives too far away, Vancouver, and the other one, if she goes to Israel she wouldn't be able to see it much because she is partially sighted. And my son, I don't think he is interested in things like that, so as we say, que sera sera, whatever will be will be.

RL: So is there anything else that you would like to add? Is there anything that we might have missed out during the course of the interview?

HF: The only thing that I would like to point out, well, not point out but just mentioned is about my brother in law, I saw him last in Dachau, he was married to my sister, G-d Rest Her Soul, and coincidence is that he was born on the same day, same month, same year, as my sister, Oleh Vashalom. And after the war he went back to Poland, he went back to Krakow, he married in Krakow again, and they had a baby girl there as well, and last thing I heard from him, in 1957, was that he found a brother in Palestine and he is going to Palestine, and that is the last time I heard from him. So I don't know what, mind you he is 16 years older than me, so you never know what can happen at that age. Especially a person who is 83, it is old, an Alte maase you don't look at it in a bad way, you look at it in a good way, it is in the Almighty's hands.

RL: Is there any message that you would like to end with? Any message you would like to end with?

HF: No, the only thing, as you know from the beginning, you heard about all my family, the only thing that I would like to show you is the photograph that I have got left,

of my family, I have got it in the dining room on the table, certificates as well, of my father Oleh Vashalom firm, photographs of my grandparents, Oleh Vashalom, my mother's parents from Vienna, photographs of my mother, Oleh Vashalom, when she was 18 years old, the wedding photograph in 1907.

RL: We will video those in a minute.

HF: And photographs of my brother and brother in laws sister and my auntie that used to be a Countess in Vienna.

Wife in the background: She was the image of the Queen Mother.

HF: And she had to change her name.

RL: Yes.

HF: Because they wouldn't let her marry a Yiddisher fellow. She became a Jewish person, as far as I was told after the war, when I saw her after the war, she kept a kosher

Tape 5: 19 minutes 1 second

home all of the time. And during the war as well, she said that her cousins, her original cousins, from the Hapsburg family, they hid them, they kept them hidden, so that is why they were alive, when I saw her she was 90 years old.

Wife in the background: So was he.

HF: So was my uncle as well.

Wife in the background: So that is not your message though love.

RL: Have you got a message you would like to finish with?

Wife in the background: You must finish with a message.

HF: The message I would like to finish with is that I am, I have done this for prosperity.

Wife in the background: No love, posterity.

HF: Prosterity.

Wife in the background: No.

HF: Also, for the cause of shoah, which is the main one, and if possible for me to get a video of it, so I should have it for my children and grandchildren.

Wife in the background: And great grandchildren, you are expecting a great grandchild.

HF: That is in time to come.

And also I would like to thank AJR and Mrs Livshin for the interview and Rob for his work with the camera.

RL: OK.

HF: And I would like to thank also Tony for sending Ros to me, I had a phone call from him last week, and he said finally he had found somebody to come.

RL: Thank you very much.

HF: Thank you.

Wife in the background: That was your message.

HF: Thank you.

Tape 5: 20 minutes 56 seconds

The photograph that now you see is my grandfather, my mother's father, who was born around 1880 in Vienna.

RL: His name?

HF: His name is Nathan Frankel, same as my surname, but there is no relation but there is the same surname.

That is a photograph of my grandmother, my mother's mother, which is taken in 1880, she was married, her name is Yetta Maria Techner, single name, she was married to my grandfather, Nathan Frankel in Vienna and that is all that I can tell you about it because I haven't got the proper dates.

The photograph is of my parents who were married in 1907 in Vienna. Abraham Myer and Helena Frankel, my mother never changed her surname, they were married in 1907 in Vienna.

The photograph you see now is my mother when she was 18 years old in Vienna, she was born in 1885, and she was 18 years old in that photograph.

RL: And her name?

HF: Her name is Helena Frankel, same as my father, she never change her surname.

The photograph you see now is my sister when she was two years old, she was born in 1912 and on that photograph she is two years old, her name is Stella Frankel. She was born in Nowy Sacz , which used to belong to Valezia.

The photograph you are looking at now is of myself when I was 13 years old in 1940, just after my Bar Mitzvah, in Nowy Sacz.

The photograph you are looking at is my sister's wedding photograph, Stella Frankel and Sammy Kaufer, they were married in 1940, during the war, in Nowy Sacz.

The photograph you are looking at is my brother, Yosef, Yosef Frankel, he was born in 1922, and that photograph was taken in 1940 during the war, the place in Nowy Sacz.

Wife in the background: Take your time.

HF: The photograph you are looking at, it's my father on the left, second on the left, it is taken in 1936 at a place of work, that a building in Nowy Sacz, Zsechov, not Nowy Sacz, in Zsechov. And my father was a Wasserleitung installer, which is in English a plumber, a master plumber, my father.

Tape 5: 24 minutes 44 seconds

The photograph you are looking at is my auntie, Auntie Mitzi, who married my uncle Freidel in Vienna. She was born Countess of Hartsberg but because she married a Yiddisher fellow she had to change her name to Singer, and then all her certificate, birth certificate and everything else had to be changed to Singer, and that photograph was taken in 1940 in Vienna.

The certificate you are looking at was issued to me by UNRRA in Mittenwald in May 1945, so I have a certificate, it also tells you there that I have been in Dachau and the number of mine is there as well.

This is a photograph of me in the corner of the certificate that UNRRA issued in 1945, May 1945, in a place called Mittenwald.

The photograph you are looking at now is my oldest daughter with my wife together taken in 2002 in my brother's house in Manchester.

Wife in the background: Names.

HF: Simone Maxine Frankel,

RL: And your wife's name?

HF: Stella Frankel, that is my wife ...

You are looking at a photograph of our youngest daughter and her husband and their three children. The photograph was taken in Manchester. Their name, their married name, is Cantor, Helena Cantor, Samuel Cantor and Michael Cantor, Adam Cantor, Lawrence Cantor and Beth Cantor. That was taken in Manchester in 1990 at Adam's Bar Mitzvah, their older son's Bar Mitzvah in Manchester.

The photograph you are looking at is our son, Michael, with his partner Veronica, it was taken two years ago, in 2002, and that was taken in Nottingham.