

>> Interviewer: Please tell us your full name.

>> Goldberg: My name is Felix Goldberg.

>> Interviewer: When and where were you born?

>> Goldberg: I was born in January, the 2nd, of 1917, in Kalisz. That was Poland at the time. That was the border between Poland and Germany between 1914 and 1918.

>> Interviewer: Well, could you tell us a little bit about your life growing up in Poland?

>> Goldberg: Oh, yes. I was born in a little village outside of the town of Kalisz, which was very small at that time. And then a few years later, we moved into town. I was a little boy, and I was the youngest of five children. I had three brothers and two sisters, and we had a little apartment on the third floor. I remember vividly, very much, that when I grew up, it was very, very poor. And at the time, we did not have any -- a lot of the time, we didn't -- I remember when we grew up, when the time was cold, the wintertime, we didn't have any groceries, and my mother had to lock the bread up, not because she wouldn't feed us, because it wasn't enough to go around. But as the years progressed a little farther down, as the children were growing up, then my mother, father went in, and they opened up an air market, a meat market, and so Mother worked and my father worked.

At the time, we were going to the public school. I remember my oldest brother, my sisters and brother went to public school. That's the only school you could attend to. And, of course, the

conditions were very, very bad. In the morning, when I was a little boy, I had to attend two services. My father was very religious. And afterwards, I had to deliver some meat at 8:00, and at 9:00, I had to go to school, to the public school, and stay there till 1:00. At 1:00, we went home, and then after we had a little dinner, then I had to go to Hebrew school. Hebrew school was till about 7:00 at night, and then I went home. No electricity. Everything was working by light, by a kerosene lamp, and the weather usually was very, very cold in the wintertimes. That was a way of life, you know, and that's how we progressed till the war came in 1939, when I was drafted in the Polish army in the town.

I lived in a town with approximately 30,000 Jewish people. The town had about 125,000 population. It was very nice and a beautiful town. We had even Jewish theaters. We had soccer clubs. It was a town which was full of life, and that's how we grew up. By the time when you were 21 years old, you had to go into the army. Luckily, for me, we had two regiments in the same town where I lived, and I served in the same town. Went to the army, to the artillery, approximately 1939, at the beginning of 1939. And on September 1, 1939, the war broke out.

So I was already in the army, and the position where we took up was around 200 meters from our house, and my father had seen me, my mother, you know, and he told me. I said, "why don't you drop everything," because we had lost the war to Hitler, you know. At the time, we could hear when Hitler came up. And Hitler, when he put the people out from Germany and put them on the Polish side, near Poland, you know, so we knew that the fate -- what's gonna happen to us. Well, we didn't know it was gonna be that bad. But after maybe three weeks, when we got farther down, deeper to the Warsaw front, and they start bombarding us from the airplanes, it was real bad. We were so tremendously harassed by the German fliers. I was buried for about three times up to my neck, and somebody pulled me out, and I lost my hearing, and I couldn't

hear for about three months. And we were captured near Warsaw around October the 1st roughly, and at that time -- two, three weeks later -- I find myself already in Germany in displaced camp, you know, in the camp for -- you know, displaced camp. And we wind up in several camps.

As far as being Jewish in the camps, it was not a big issue because, at the time, Hitler didn't get his program started yet. But we were separated, and we worked on the farms. Very, very poor food, you know. We were over there about a year's time. And cold. The winter was very bad in 1940. After maybe six, seven months on the farms, they came and ordered, we have to be released, all the Jewish soldiers have to be released, that they're going home. That was great, great news for us. My God, we're gonna go home. We're gonna see our parents and anything else. But it's not so. They put everybody on a train and took us to a town near south Poland that was near Warsaw on the other side, Lublin, which they have a camp and set up camp and got all the Jewish people over there, and we stayed there for about four weeks, beaten every day by the SS people. No food. We were so dirty. No baths, no nothing.

And they finally, after three, four weeks, they gave us a piece of paper and said we can go back -- they want to put us on the train to Warsaw. At the time, they opened up a ghetto in Warsaw. And I knew my parents were not there because they -- I never had any communication, but I heard they still in a little town near Kalisz where my grandfather was. And as I marched in the back from that camp out, every day they released 400 people, 300 people, and one lady, a Jewish lady -- I couldn't walk, and she picked me out from the back and said, "Come on to my house." And I did go to her house, and she put me up about a week's time. In the meantime, my brother found me in Lublin. He found out from somebody where I was, and he was also in DP camp in Germany, and he came by to see me at the time.

>> Interviewer: Had both of your brothers been in the army?

>> Goldberg: One of my brothers been in the army. I have one brother with me in Columbia, and one brother I have in Israel. He is the oldest one. They're still very much alive.

And he stayed with me for a day or two, and then he left. And at the time, I got sick. I couldn't walk, and the lady kept me in her house for about ten days. And finally, I caught the train. I took the -- we had to wear swastikas on our coats, but I took off my swastika and took a chance, and I caught a train to the direction where my parents were. It was a town. They call it Turek, T-U-R-E-K. That's where my parents, I understood, lived. As I caught the train and I got on the train, I was recognized as being Jewish, and then an SS man came. Several people did that, and he said, "well, I'll show them a piece of paper." Somebody -- they had told, "Just give me a piece of paper that I can go to this town." He said, "This is not good. No Jewish people are allowed to go in that place anymore. You're gonna have to go back," after a good beating, you know. He beat the heck out of me. After a good beating, he sent me back to -- he said, "Go back to Warsaw in the ghetto where all the Jewish people belong."

>> Interviewer: Mr. Goldberg, when you said that they put a swastika on you, was that a star?

>> Goldberg: It was a star. It was a Star of David.

>> Interviewer: To identify you as being Jewish.

>> Goldberg: It's like the Jewish star. Everybody had to wear that because of being Jewish. But I took a chance and took that emblem off, and I was riding without it. But I was recognized. I looked very much Semitic. And they took me off the train and waited for the next train. But in meantime, he worked me over

pretty good, socked my face, knocked out two teeth of mine, and said, "You go back to the Warsaw ghetto." I didn't want to go back to the Warsaw ghetto. At one station, I jumped from the train and walked by foot.

>> Interviewer: And you said you didn't want to go back. Had you ever been there, to the Warsaw ghetto?

>> Goldberg: I had never been to Warsaw and never wanted to go to Warsaw. I heard the rumors that they opened up a ghetto in Warsaw, and, "I think that's the last place I want to go," I said.

And I went back, jumped back. At one train station, I jumped from the train, and I didn't have any food. I stayed overnight in the field, and there were border patrol there, but I had a piece of paper from the Wehrmacht that I can go to this town, and he let me walk by. And I walked to the next little town. I walked all night and all day, and I walked up to the little town they called Kutno. It's spelled K-U-T-N-O. And I came in -- there was a curfew at night. You couldn't walk at night, but I came in to a place where they had a bakery, and he let me spend the night over there.

The next day, there was a place in the community, and they gave me some -- I was very filthy, very dirty, and the rest of it. I cannot tell you how much dirt was on me and with all the worms and everything. They gave me new -- not new clothes, but they gave me better clothes, and I stayed two days. And then I went by foot -- I wouldn't want to catch a train -- and I went to a little -- it took me two nights and two days to come in to little town where I found my mother and father. And they lived in the little town where my grandfather was. The name of the place was Tuliszków. It's near Turek. And my grandfather owned a little house over there where the German police was there, and I came in at night. And I never had got in touch with my parents

until 1941. That was 1941, in October, and that was the first time I saw my parents. And we stayed in this little town for about a year, maybe a year and two months.

We worked -- there was no -- people were not in business. We worked everything for the German -- for the city. We dug ditches. We worked in the public works, and the only reward we got is a loaf bread a day, and that's how we got by. But my mother and father had a little bit money left, you know, that we could survive. We worked in this place about a year, year and a half. After a year and a half --

>> Interviewer: Were the rest of your family there? You mentioned your parents.

>> Goldberg: No, though I had two sisters over there.

>> Interviewer: Were they living there with you?

>> Goldberg: They were there with them, yes. They were there with us. They were married, and they were there. One of my brother-in-laws passed away of typhoid, but they were with my parents and my grandparents too. They had a little house, and the police let them stay in the back over there at the house. The German police -- the house belonged to my father, but they took the house away from him. But they let them stay for a while. But after a while, they moved out everybody. They moved them to a little ghetto in that little town, and that's how we went to work. We went to work over there. We'd dig ditches and different things, you know, pools, you know, public work in the little town. It was a small town, maybe about 5,000-10,000 population. But they had the German guards, and we had to abide by them.

After a year, year and a half, the older Jewish people, all the men 21 years old, we have to get -- they put us on a train. From

our little town, it was probably about a hundred from that little place. And then they took us on a small train, and we went to a different direction. The town was named Poznan. That's the town where they had, in 1956, the riots in Poland. And all around this town, there were several thousand people, and they opened up little camps. They liquidate all that we -- they took all the schools. They liquidated -- there was no school for the Polish people. They took all the schools and put our people in. Every little village had 200-300 people, and we were working in the village.

>> Interviewer: Now, who went to this town? You went. Did any of your family go with you?

>> Goldberg: No family.

>> Interviewer: Okay, just --

>> Goldberg: Only men 21, 22, 23, start from 17/18 years old. They got us all together. No women, no nothing. Just single men.

>> Interviewer: So you were the only one from your family, at this time, that was forced to go?

>> Goldberg: I'm the only one from the family. Nobody went with me. We just -- I had a whole group of people and friends. We were there, and they put us on a train, and they opened up work camps. Those were work camps, where we worked and we dug new rivers, you know, because that's supposed to be Germany already. That shouldn't go back to Poland anymore. They, they -- that was an area where, during the war, a lot of German-Pol -- they call them *Volksdeutsche*, a lot of people who were Germans, but they lived in Poland. It belonged -- at the time, it belongs to Germany already. They said there will be no Poland anymore, and we worked in those camps.

The food was very, very poor. We ate every day -- they'd get us about a quarter pound of bread and a quart of potato peels. That's all we had to eat all day long. In that little school where we went, we didn't have any baths. They produced boards, you know, and put straw on top, and that's how we worked. And then we were there, about 250 people, and about a year and a half or two years later, it was left about 75, 80 people. Everything else was died on typhoid. I was sick on typhoid too. I fought it. You know, I was lucky. I was throwing up. You know, bigger the people were, the harder they fell because a big person needs more food than a small person, you know.

And at that time, we were working over there about a year and a half. Some people got out at night. We were fenced around by a fence. There was no guards, but when you got caught overnight going to people, ask for bread or something like that, when you got caught, we had hangings every Sunday. Every week, they would put together, from all the camps, all of the people, and they hang every week 10-12 people, you know, right in the middle of the woods just for going out at night. And that's how it went on till the end of 1942.

In 1942, they put all -- there was an order to keep all those people together, bring all those people together, and we caught a train from Rawicz -- this was a town near Poznan -- and we all --

>> Interviewer: All those people, you mean all the people that were in that camp?

>> Goldberg: All the camps. They had a series of camps over in this area where there were maybe 10-12 camps. Each village had about 200-300 people because, when we dug the rivers, we had to meet the other people when we finished after a while. But then the order came.

>> Interviewer: So you were aware of other camps?

>> Goldberg: Right, we were aware. We saw the people. They were in the same condition that we are. We dressed -- they didn't give us any dressing. Everything was torn apart. Everything was just -- we looked like people from the other world, you know. There was no washing, no nothing.

>> Interviewer: It was still all men?

>> Goldberg: All men, all men. And that's -- then the order came in the end of 1942, 1943, and we were all expedite on a train. Half of 'em was half dead anyhow. And they transport us. We were riding about two, three days, and we came to a place called Auschwitz. We came in at night, at 12:00 at night. And we didn't realize what's what because nobody knew about it. We were only men, and we were lucky because we were only men, but I understand later, the previous transports that came to Auschwitz, they all were taken off. No belongings were taken away, but we didn't have any belongings with us because everything was so poor. But they knew that we came from a work place, so they didn't take nothing away from us because we didn't have anything.

And the whole shipment was left alive, except they said who cannot work and cannot, uh...cannot cope for themselves should go on the trucks at that time. And I never want to do that, you know. I always tried to go -- I always tried to go to work wherever I was, and I think that was the best solution. I always was a freelancer. I said, "I'm first to go to work," and that's what I did. And a lot of people went on the truck, and they went right straight to the crematorium because they didn't want to bother with them, you know. Then we stay there till about in the morning, at the one place. In the morning, they gave us a bath. They put us, no shoes, barefooted, and they put tattoos on our arm, which I have right in here, you know.

At the time, I was an early bird. In 1943, there was a lot of people there, but we was one of the earliest people in Auschwitz. So they left some alive. The next morning -- there was Auschwitz, and there was also Birkenau. Birkenau was a place where they took all the people who were alive, you know, and they left them over there. It was big blocks, buildings, made out of wood, and each block had probably 500, 600 people, and each floor, it was boards, four or five boards, and each board had about 15, 20 people, and that's how we looked, you know. It looked like wild animals, you know.

The food consist of black coffee in the morning and soup. No bread at that time. They didn't have it. We stayed there three weeks. And the beatings in the morning -- we had to get up at 4:00 in the morning. We had to count every one off, you know, and if anybody walk fast or slow -- you got beat anyhow. They put you ahead in the oven, you know, and just -- you had to be beaten. There's no way in the world -- that was the orders, you know.

>> Interviewer: Did y'all talk to each other?

>> Goldberg: Yeah, we can talk to each other. Everybody was in the same place. It was about 300, 400, 500 people in one place.

>> Interviewer: What types of things did you talk about?

>> Goldberg: To the people?

>> Interviewer: Right.

>> Goldberg: Dream of having a loaf of bread in my hand, if we ever gonna get -- we dreamed about food. That's the main part. When you were there, you were just hungry. You know, there's no place to go. You look for -- only what you could see is -- we

didn't realize that the -- there was a big chimney, and they're burning people over there. Later on -- you know, it's no wonder the world didn't know it because they wouldn't believe that they were burning people over there with crematoriums over there. We looked at that thing; we wouldn't believe it, you know.

>> Interviewer: So you were not even aware of it?

>> Goldberg: No. I was not aware of it. We wouldn't believe that.

>> Interviewer: Did you ever see people not come back, people that were with you leave and not come back?

>> Goldberg: No. I'll get to that.

>> Interviewer: Okay, I'm sorry.

>> Goldberg: We were there about three weeks, and the winter started, set in. That was the worst part. In the summertime, you can cope, but in the wintertime, it was very, very cold. The climate in East Europe is very, very cold, like 20-25 below sometimes, and that was the worst part of it. And then after three, four weeks -- I don't know, you probably -- everybody knows about a man that was named Dr. Mengele, you know. And he pulled out a whole block. You know, everybody, about 400 or 500 people, came in. And he start -- they start coming forward. whoever looked good, he sent 'em to the right, and whoever didn't look good, he sent 'em to the left. That means, to the right, you were lucky to be alive. Anything to the left, they put them right on the trucks and put 'em in the crematorium on the left. I was one of the luckiest people and was alive.

And next, the same -- next afternoon, they give us shoes and give us different clothes and put us on the truck, and we traveled approximately around 30 kilometers, which was about 20

miles, to a coal mine. Then we -- I said, "That's great," you know, "At least we can get to work." See, Auschwitz was as big probably as the city of Columbia, or bigger, maybe bigger, and they had, also, work camps. They had coal mines. All right near there was a lot of coal mines, and they sent us to the coal mines, and we start working the coal mines.

worked in the coal mines for several years, the food was somewhat better. But I considered myself awful lucky because I worked in the coal mine as a -- what do you call -- I sent cars up and back -- an operator of the elevator. It was a great job. And many, many times, they send a lot of people up, our people, which they got killed from falling coal. I was the lucky one. I had to go get 'em and lift 'em on my shoulders and bring 'em up, and that was the worst part I didn't like.

But, otherwise, we worked there in this camp for about -- I worked on the second shift over there. We went to work like at the -- in the morning. We went on the second shift. We start at 2:00 in the afternoon till 10:00. But we came home at 12:00, 1:00 in the morning. We had to walk home. As we walked from the coal mine, we were chained. We worked 200 people every shift, but we were chained with rods through our hands. You know, we were in cuffs so we couldn't run away. So that took -- in place of working 8 hours, it took us about 13, 14 hours till we got to the barrack.

At the barrack, we didn't have a bed. You had to chase a place where you can sleep and find yourself a place. If not, you found yourself on the floor. And at 5 in the morning, we had to be up because we had to be counted again. Then we went back to bed. About 11:00, we had to get up again to be counted again and get ready to go to work. And that took us all the way around the clock, so it was a murderous job. And then, plus, you had to go to work, and the work was coal, you know, over there. But I was extremely lucky because the people I worked with over there,

they had -- there was Polish people, and we worked with civilian people. Some of them, they did bring us a little bit of food that wasn't that bad, you know. But you come out and were filthy dirty, and I always organized another extra set of clothes. You had to be real good and to survive that thing and to be able to do some theft, you know. Not food, but clothes so you look good. When you looked good and you cleaned your clothes, you had a better chance, because usually, you know, if you take some extra time -- and I did that. So, anyhow, it wasn't as bad over there as in Birkenau. We were hungry all the time, but it was better than over there in Birkenau.

That'd been going on, something like that, for about a year. At the end of 1944, we could hear all the, all the -- we knew, roughly, that Russia is pressing. We knew we had to hold on. We had people coming in from Warsaw, from the ghetto, from the uprising in Warsaw. We knew roughly what's going on. We knew every moment what's going on.

>> Interviewer: So that's how you got news, is when new people came?

>> Goldberg: Well, that was our hope, you know, because we could, we could, we could attack the SS people. They were a little softer, you know. Their attitude changed a little bit, you know. Not much, but they changed, you know, and we could see that the end is coming very much. Anyhow, one evening after that, we went to work in the coal mine. When we come home about 1:00 in the morning, there was no more camp left. The American air force mistook the camp, you know, and bombed our camp, and there were a lot of people killed. They also got the SS quarters at the same time. We came in about 11:00. There was no place where to go. Everything was leveled. A lot of people dead, but we were still alive, you know.

And the next morning, we -- you know, the SS people knew that the end is coming, but they wouldn't believe it. They formed some little groups with themselves, you know, like 15-20 SS men. They took us, the whole camp -- about 6,000 people was left. There was about 10,000-12,000 people in the camp, at that camp they call Jaworzno. That's a coal mine camp. They took the whole camp out on a march, and they march -- it wasn't very far or deep, the German border, and we were marching for two weeks. And they -- I would approximately imagine about 6,000 people. Night and day, night and day, no food. And we slept as we walked, you know, but we had another idea. You know, if we put hands together, five, six people, and walked together, then we could walk together. But whoever walked single went asleep and walked aside, and he got shot right away. They killed a lot of people.

We finally, after two weeks, we came into a camp, also another displaced camp they called Gross-Rosen. And there was another displaced camp, we -- luckily, they give us a little bread we eat over there, and they give us another piece of bread. And a day later, they put us on a train and went ahead and put us -- went to Buchenwald. I didn't know we were going to Buchenwald. I did not know. And probably about 15,000-20,000 people on this train.

We traveled on this train without any food, without anything, for about four nights. We went through all the bombardments, and we went through Berlin. And half of the people -- we were traveled like this for about two weeks. Very little food. The bombardments were awful. And finally, we wind up in Buchenwald. One night, you know, we came into Buchenwald. It was January of 1945.

And we -- I have to go back before Buchenwald. I'm sorry. I, I -- it's very hard to remember. It's been years, you know. And when we went under their march back, we wind up in a city called Blechhammer. A nice, little town, you know. We stayed there 12

-- the frost was so bad. It was about 30 below zero. And I laid down on the middle of the little town. We all -- everybody was dead, you know. It wouldn't be for my brother-in-law David -- he was with me -- I would have been -- I would be going to sleep because it was so cold. He said it wouldn't be for a moment, I would have been dead. They took us to that camp, the Blechhammer camp, and we stayed there for three nights, and I could hear the shooting, the artillery, in the back of me. And I thought that was -- we gonna be liberated right there, but it wasn't so.

Later, I find out I was at camp together with my brother. I didn't know he was there. I didn't know he was there. But he was lucky enough -- he stayed till he was liberated. And we were taken with another SS men group, and we went, again, to that little -- they took us to that Gross-Rosen camp. Then they put us on trains, and then we wind up in Buchenwald.

At Buchenwald, it was also at night, and I thought, for sure, we're gonna go to the gas chamber. I was 100-percent sure this is it because they put us through showers and things like that. By now, we knew what's happening over there, you know. And I said, "This is it," you know. But somehow or another, they give us showers and they left us alive.

We stayed in Buchenwald for -- between January of 1945 and April of 1945. We could hear artillery in the back. We could hear planes. And the Germans -- when we came to Buchenwald in 1945, we were 81,000 people over there in that camp. We were together. Everything was mixed: Russians, Yugoslav, Germans, everything in the world. Every evening, they give us a little wooden nickel. For this wooden nickel, we could get a quart of soup.

Well, a lot of Russians, they were on our block. In the morning, we could find 10, 15 dead over there. They choked them and took the little wooden nickel away because they want to get an extra meal. That's how it worked. Every morning in Buchenwald, there

was 30, 40, 50 dead outside the block, you know. They just hauled them away, and that's how it was. That was life. We walked over deaths, you know. That was a common thing, every day. It didn't bother anybody. You know, that's -- if you're hungry, you just do whatever is possible, if you're stronger.

At the time, between January -- they start to -- Buchenwald, they start to moving out some people. Every day, they called numbers, and every day, maybe 1,000, maybe 1500, they took 'em out. They claimed they went to work. It wasn't so. They called my number many, many times. I said, "I am not leaving this place. If I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die right in here." I could hear the artillery, and I said, "This has to be it. Otherwise, I'm not going nowhere." And sure enough, I stuck it out so much -- and a lot of people did. I went, and they called my name many times. I stayed under the wooden -- under the block for about three nights. I remember I had some sugar, uh...turnips. They were very sweet. I had to eat. We had to eat something. They tore my throat up, you know.

Sure enough, on Friday morning, on April the 11th of 1945, we saw the first American walk into... I'm sorry.

>> Interviewer: That's okay.

>> Goldberg: We saw the first American walking into Buchenwald, and that was a day I'll never forget. That was a time -- that was a Friday, and that night, Friday, there was a man by the name of Rabbi Schacter. He was a chaplain in the American army. And he put all the people together, and we had a service that very same night. And you can imagine how tragic it was. But, anyhow, that was a day I'll never forget in my life.

Afterwards, we stayed over there two, three weeks. A lot of people died over there. The lots were full. The American army didn't know how to cope because they didn't have the right

people, the right food. There were -- the basements were full, and then they start to bringing in the German people from Weimar. Buchenwald was outside Weimar. It was a big town in east Germany. And they showed 'em all those things, and they start to work at 'em and start to bury the people, and they moved us out from there, moved us to the south blocks. We stayed there for about two, three weeks, maybe more. And we got some better food, and they start to cook us some things, and then we got a little better. And at that time, the American army, they had -- the Yalta Conference took place with Churchill and Stalin and this and that. Then the east Germans knew their fate was on, that we're gonna have to move out from there.

They gave us a choice, either you stay here or go back to Poland, or you can come with us. Of course, we chose to go to...chose to go with the American army 'cause, first thing, they gave us food, and they were great to us. We met some Jewish American soldiers, you know. And, oh, they were so great. They was so nice to be with. They would cry like children when they came in the camp. And so the people over there, all of the people, it just -- you cannot describe all that. It's impossible for anybody to describe that, what happened.

In the meantime, they moved us out from there. We went to a place, which you call, you call -- they took all the displaced persons, put them on a train. Still on a train where cows went, but it was decent. Everything was organized. You had food, and food, that's -- it didn't bother us at all, you know. And we went up -- we came into Landsberg. That was near Munich. And they opened up a camp over there for all the displaced persons. And they were all nationalities, but they made the Jewish camp out of it, and there were probably about 5,000-6,000 people. And we were supported by the UNRRA, which was united refugee organization.

And that's how we made our life and start to -- at the time, General Eisenhower came to visit the camp, and we were happy. I remember talking to him. It was a thrill to be there.

>> Interviewer: What types of things did you do at this camp?

>> Goldberg: We did nothing. We, we had -- they did have work in the camp. There were different schools you could go to. You go to -- like, we could go have courses of tailors, tailor and dresses, and they had a -- called the ORT, the organization which takes care of the people, and we did a lot of good things. They had shops. You could learn a trade over there, carpenters, you know. Everything was furnished through the united refugee organization. Also, they joined the American Jewish organization. They furnished us with that. You could be very productive. In fact, a lot of people did learn a trade over there when they got through over there.

And at that time, I -- it was very -- there were some women. We started to see women coming in too. And at the time, I met a little girl over there, you know, and there were several of them. There was my wife Bluma, you know. And we started getting a little better, more like people, you know. And there was a fellow. I said, "You know, I was so good organizer, I organized a camera, you know, and I have made" -- I said -- my friend said, "I know a little girl who wants a nice picture." So I did take her picture. And a few days later, I brought her back the...brought back the picture, and she said, "How much I owe you?" I said, "You don't owe me nothing. You owe me a kiss." And I gave her a kiss, and she slapped my face. And from then on, she was -- you will see her this afternoon. That's how I met my wife, you know.

Then we stayed over there in Landsberg about several years. I married her, you know. In fact, she had a sister also with her during her time in camp, so we had two weddings. I was with my

brother-in-law, which his -- we had two weddings in one night, two sisters, and a friend of mine, we, you know, we married two girls, two sisters. So those sisters are still together in Columbia, live together.

>> Interviewer: When did you get news about the rest of your family? When did you find your brothers?

>> Goldberg: My brothers, I -- my brother went in Israel.

>> Interviewer: Did you find them in Landsberg?

>> Goldberg: They, at the time -- at that time, that was in 1945 when the illegal immigration to Israel started. And it was the -- the Haganah Jewish organization was born, and they were taking people from Germany and from our camp, different camps, and put them on boats illegally to Israel, because you know the fate of our people. We'd like to have a country so much of our own, and it's been 2,000 years since that didn't happen, and that was a good chance of that happening at that time, you know, and we were very much Zionist-oriented. We were all for it, and everybody was working toward it. And my two brothers left me to go to -- at that time, it was Palestine. Today, it's Israel. And they left to go on the -- they call it *Aliyah Bet*. That's illegal immigration. And they got caught, and they wind up in Cypress. But when Israel was created in 1948, they were brought into Israel, and they start work in Israel.

And they wanted to bring -- I was still in Germany at that time, and they want me to go to Germany. But somehow or another -- we had the registration to everywhere in the world -- to New Zealand, to Australia, to God knows where -- but they sent us, also, to the United States. We did, and finally, we get the papers. Her sister was the one who responsible for, and she was here already. She'd come six months earlier. And we finally got

the papers, and I decided not to go to Israel and to go to the States.

And finally, we went to the States. Our first transport went to New Orleans. They [indistinct], and we were so sick on the way. We were transported not by passenger ship. It was a trooper, you know. We left Bremen, and on the way, it was -- everybody, a hundred percent of the people, everybody was sick so bad that I said, "I don't believe I'll ever live to be in America." You know, but, somehow or another, that wasn't the worst thing in your life. But we came into New Orleans, and when we come into New Orleans, the band was playing so beautiful, and we were greeted by the Jewish organization and by the -- all organization, all churches were there. They took us right away to their church. We spent the night over there. The next day, we were designated to go to Columbia, South Carolina, and that's how we came into Columbia, South Carolina.

At the time, I had a little boy with me. He was 14 months old, and we couldn't speak the language. Of course we couldn't. It was very hard. So people guided us from one train station to the other station until we came to Columbia. When we came to Columbia, there was two ladies waiting for us, plus her sister. And we came in on October day of 1949 to Columbia. And it was a very touchy, tough situation because it's very hard to come to a country which you don't know the language and you couldn't talk and you couldn't work, you know. And that was one of the main things which was bad for us. But, you know, you have to cope with life. You cope with life.

We came over through United Jewish Appeal. We'd been helped. They paid for the trip. And each church took a few families, and we came to Beth Shalom Synagogue, you know, or it was the temple, you know. They're both churches. You know, they're both Jewish. It doesn't make any difference. And we -- first thing, they want me to go to school, but as for education, I had a

seventh-grade education at home, which probably equals here to high school because the way we are taught in Europe was different than we're taught here. We didn't have three months' vacation, you know. We had only two months, and we had to go to school still. Anyhow, we came to Columbia, and of course we didn't know the language. In Europe, I was an apprentice of a printer. I was learning at the time the war broke out. I was 21 years old at the time. Anyhow, I wanted to go to work as a printer, but not knowing how to speak English, it was a bad situation. So the community said, "well, we'll pay you a little bit money every week, and you start going to school."

At the time, there was an opportunity school in west Columbia. Mrs. Gray was the teacher. You know, she was the principal. And it was a long way, and I caught the bus every day, and I went to opportunity school. They put me in the first grade. I went to the first grade, but I could read and write, you know. I wasn't...I wasn't illiterate, you know. And then one day, I went to Miss Gray. I said, "Miss Gray, I can count, and I can read and write, but I can't understand English." I said, "I want you to give me a test." She said, "Fine." So she put me in the second grade -- in the sixth grade. I said, "well, that's better." But I went to the sixth grade, and nothing come off for me because those things I knew. I knew how to read and to write.

So finally, I quit the school, and there was a family by the name of -- Mrs. Julian Hennig in Columbia. It was a very beautiful person. She's not alive anymore. And she took me home for several months, and she gave me lessons of English.

And, of course, I start to work for a company by the name of General Arts Floor Coverings, and I work for them for -- well, I would start working. I had the same problem, you know. I couldn't speak, but I could learn how to work, you know. At the time, they had a job in New Mexico, in Las Cruces, White Sands Proving Ground. They asked me if I would go over there to work.

I said, "I'll go anywhere. I'd go to South Korea to work." So we were over there for about six, eight weeks, and I couldn't get in the camp because I wasn't a citizen. But somehow or another, they gave me permission to go in the camp. I remember we did -- we had 106 houses for the Navy. And I start to work over there. We were four people, and we worked piecework, and I did approximately 75 houses, me and one man. And when I came back from there and I made my first \$450, I said to my wife, "We are rich!" There's nothing better in life, you know. I said, "This is what I've always dreamed. I can eat. I have a child."

Anyhow, I work for this company for about five years, and I saved up some money, and I bought the company out. And I stayed over there a while, and then we moved up the street, and we built a new -- 'cause in the meantime, we had two more children. We had another son, Karl, and then we have a daughter, Esther. We had two boys and a girl. And we built a new store. I remember, I went to the bank, and I said to the banker, I said, "Look, Mr. Jeffcoat, I need \$10,000. I want to buy this piece of property." He said, "You need what?" I said, "I need \$10,000." But he saw the way I did business. He gave it to me. He let me have it. And, of course, I paid him back. We needed to build a new building, you know. In the meantime, we had very good response. We went into the tile distributing business, the ceramic business.

And the kids work business, you know, and we have the kids in the business, and they opened another store, and that's the opportunity of America. I'm happily married, got a beautiful wife. You will probably meet her this afternoon. And that's... we go, we can buy whatever we want to. This is the land of opportunity.

>> Interviewer: And you learned to speak English, obviously.

>> Goldberg: I don't know. Whatever I do, I -- we try very hard to keep up with the events, today's events. We're active in the church, and we're active in the Masons. We're active in -- any organization, we support anything possible we can, whatever we can. I think this is the greatest there is, and we support this country. It's just wonderful. It's a wonderful place to be. I think it's the most wonderful place in the world.

>> Interviewer: Well, thank you for telling us your story. Is there anything else you want to add?

>> Goldberg: I would like to add something to it. I wrote it down. I would like to say something concluding this interview. I think I'm a fairly happy guy, and I am a grateful guy. I live in the best country in the world, the U.S.A., with the best wife in the world, Bluma. But I carry inside me a very unpretty past, and I worry that -- what I experienced in my past others should not experience in their future. Let us all appreciate the freedom we have and guard it and preserve it at all costs. That's all I have to say.

>> Interviewer: Well, thank you. Thank you. How do you feel?

>> Goldberg: How was it?

>> Interviewer: You did good. You did very good.

>> Goldberg: Well, I probably left out half of it. You know.

00:57:44