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My Life Story

I will now write the memories of my life-history and how I survived the Holocaust to the best as I can remember. I always thought of myself as having an excellent memory, remembering episodes since I was less than 5 years old. My father Benjamin Leib (Leonard) Kuperberg was born in 1900 in Warsaw-Poland and my mother Sheindel Malka-Lass was born in 1903 in Sandomir-Poland. They were married in Sandomir in 1923. I was born in May 1 - 1924. They named me Nachman, and later in the U.S. my name became Nathan. My father was a very religious man. He was a Bratzlauer Chasid, so he named me Nachman after the Bratzlauer Rabbi Nachman. As my parents told me, we moved to the town of Choszelle-North Poland right at the Prussian - German border in 1925 when I was 1 year old. We lived there for 4 years and when I was 5 years we moved to the city of Sandomir, to my mother's home town. I had there grandparents my mothers father Itchele-Itzchak Lass and her mother Mayta also her brother Hershel Lass his wife Lea with their family. My grandparents owned 2 apartments in the building. They promised us 1 large apartment and that they will be living together with us occupying one room. Going back to the town of Chorzelle where we lived for 4 years I can remember the town which I always memorized and thinking about it all through my lifetime. I think the reason I remember so much is that it is my nature to dwell and recall the past since my very childhood. Even today I still think many times of the past. My father was a Hebrew teacher - Melamed. He was teaching young boys from 8 years to 13 years. Memorable are those years of childhood. I probably remember since I was 4 years old. One event is outstanding in my memory when I accidentally run into the shaft of a horse wagon bloodying my nose and running home crying. I can remember some of our neighborhoods there. One was a shoemaker and one a coachmen. They had 2 big girls and the girls like to play with me picking me up high. I remember the coachman had horses and a wagon and I loved when he took me along for a ride when it was not too far away from home, also when he took his horses to the river to have them drink the water from the river. I remember one day I played a trick on him when he to go for a business trip outside of the town. The coach was full of merchandise. I wanted he should take me along but he said it is too far. While he went inside the house I climbed into the wagon and hid myself. I remember, after he left the town and we were way over the bridge already, he stopped his wagon. He must have heard that something was moving inside. Of course he discovered me right away and off I went from the wagon. Furthermore, I remember he waited form some peasants who went to town and he asked them to take me along back to town. As I wrote before, when I was 5 years we moved to my mothers home place Sandomir, which was located at the river Wisla about 90 miles from Cracaw. Our family then was already larger with my brother Schlomo 1 1/2 years younger and my third brother Chaskel who was about 3 years younger. As I mentioned before my father was a Hebrew teacher and when I was 8-10 years old I was helping out in school. I remember when we came to live in Sandomir in 1929. In later years I remember, Sandomir was a beautiful city located on a big heel. It was a beautiful panorama to look at the city from a distance at nighttime when the lights were on. The city had a population of 10,000 now 50,000. It is a historic city built 800 years ago by the polish King Cashmir the Great. There are many churches castles towers, a big historical Rathouse (City Hall) and a beautiful synagogue. The story goes that the King had a jewish girl friend by the name of Esterka and that he built the synagogue in her name. There is

still a street in Cracaw by the name of Ulica Estery. He was the king who brought over the Jews from other countries in Europe to Poland in order to develop industry and commerce in Poland and gave the Jews all the rights and privileges in Poland. I have to say my parents did not have an easy life almost every year my mother gave birth to another child until we were seven brothers. The salary my father earned as a Hebrew teacher and with the children growing up, the expenses were bigger and bigger and it wasn't easy to make ends meet. My father was a very religious man and by teaching the children it wasn't easy for him. He was by nature very disciplined and that made his teaching harder and more nervous, by having to discipline some of the more difficult children. One day he decided to give up teaching on a full day basis. He started to learn to be an electrician. Since he was a very capable man he learned the trade very fast and soon he earned a very nice living. His attitude was to open a store is not his choice, because you have to do some cheating in order to compete and to exist. He spent now half of time teaching and half of the time making electrical installations. Just then a law came out that the wiring had to be reworked and made inside the walls.. Before this law came out most apartments had the wiring on top of the walls. So there was plenty of work for electricians. He soon gave up teaching altogether he had no time for it. He made then a very good living and we were all happy that he gave up teaching.

But soon a terrible thing happened. World War II broke out. September 1, 1939. Fascist Hitler Germany invaded Poland, I was 15 years old.

I will now go back 2 years when I was 13 years old. Since my father was a very religious man, right after my Bar Mitzwa he had plans for me to continue my yeshiva study in Ostrowietz about 50 kilometers from Sandomir. But at the age of 13 I had already different ideas. At the age of 11 I started secretly to read secular Jewish literature books like Sholom Aleichem, Peretz and Mendele a new world opened up for me. Since 11 years of age I was already a serious thinking boy reading already books and newspapers, wanting to know what the world is like outside of religion. Of course, I had to hide this from my father. The nature of his being so religious did not allow my father to be tolerant towards me to see me reading at that age other books than religious books. I like already sports to play soccer games among boys of my age. Once my father saw me reading a book by Peretz, but he didn't say a word. but I saw he didn't like it. That being my situation, I decided with my mothers approval and help to travel by train secretly without my fathers knowledge to Warsaw, where almost the entire family lived and to learn a trade there. That was in July 1938 when I was 14 years.

It was summertime between the school season when the fare was only half price for children to travel. But you could travel only under the supervision of a grownup who could take along 4 children with him. My mother found someone to take me along. Actually, I wasn't considered a child anymore. At the age of 14 I had already finished 5 years of public school and 2 years of High School. A school day was from 8:30 in the morning to 1:30 in the afternoon. And the Hebrew school from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. I should have continued my studies in High School but my father wanted better yeshiva study in Hebrew only, and I did not agree with this. That is why I wanted instead to learn a trade. I dressed myself to look younger and said I was younger. My supervisor understood this and since he knew me, he took a chance and took me along to Warsaw. My father's family in Warsaw was a large family and they were all

well to do, meaning the all lived very comfortably. My grandfather Chaskel and my grandmother Chava had 18 children from one marriage, 10 sons and 8 daughters. About 6 of them lived in Warsaw. Others lived in Australia, Germany, Argentina and other cities. My oldest Aunt Henele and Husband Jankel Recht and their children Dorka, Mary, Mendel, Leon and Bernard. I mention only those that I met. My second Aunt Brochele with Husband Gershon Pluciennik and their children Dora and Schlomo Pluciennik in whose shop I worked in Warsaw. My third Aunt Mala with husband Yudel and their two daughters and son Herschel who was lucky to emigrate to then Palestine just before the war broke out. My fourth Aunt Gitel and husband Israel and their 2 sons and 1 daughter which names I don't remember. Now, my Uncle Meyer and wife Gitele, sons: Sholem David, Benjamin Leib and Mendel. Daughters: Esther, Chawa and Genia. Another brother Avrumke had just passed away one year before my coming to Warsaw. He was the only brother who came to my fathers wedding with four other sisters to Sandomir. I heard many interesting things about him.

My grandfather died in 1928 and my grandmother Chava in 1926-27. My grandfather Chaskel was a very religious man and my father was his youngest son who also was religious as himself. My father told us that when he became Bar Mitzwa he won a golden vest watch with hebrew letters for the hours. He won it at a concourse by saying 40 pages of the Talmud by memory. Naturally his father my grandfather was very proud of his only religious son. He was not only religious but was also learned well the entire Talmud and many other sforim. After my arrival to Warsaw I went to my Aunt Henele and told her my situation at home and that I came to Warsaw to learn a trade. My Aunt Henele called a meeting of the family to her house and my family were very sympathetic to me. The family of my father were not orthodox religious, meaning being modern religious. They decided that each week somebody will take care of me with food and lodging. I found this arrangement very satisfactory. That is how I got to know them so well. My cousin Schlomo Pluciennik who was then 21 years had his own shop of jewelry engraving which was done on a machine that he imported from Germany. He was very successful and made very good money. He proposed to me to come and work for him, that he'll teach me the trade. I accepted his proposal and was very happy to work for him.

I liked very much the work, and as an apprentice boy he paid me a decent wage. I rented my own room to have to walk closer to his shop. I was also able to save some money because I didn't have food expenses. Around February 1939 my cousin was drafted to serve in the Polish Army, and I had to look for another job. It wasn't easy for a 14 year old boy to find a good job, so I took a job in a Restaurant as a meal deliverer to stores and shops. The work was hard, but at that age nothing was too hard. I had plenty good food to eat and didn't need to go to my relatives to eat. I thanked them and was satisfied for the time being. that year the situation in Europe became already very tense. Germany demanded the return from Poland the port city of Danzig and threatened Poland with war. They had already annexed Austria and the Sudetenland of Chechoslwakia and everybody was talking of the possibility of war breaking out.

I then received a letter from my mother that I should come home. That my father is not angry at me anymore. My mothers letter convinced me to go home. My homecoming was very pleasant. It felt good to be back home and to see my parents, brothers, relatives, and friends again. I was 15 years old then I think it was the month of July - 39. It was my satisfaction that I gained some respect with my father. He asked me in detail about everybody of the family in Warsaw. I was soon looking for a job. My father was busy working as an electrician and

my younger brother Schlomo helped him out. It was a big apprehension in Poland, that war may brake out soon. Poland refused to give in to Germanys demand to give back Danzing, and so the situation was very tense. I had 2 cousins, Schmul and Mendel who were painters. I soon joined them and learned to paint. I got this job as a painters helper, worked a lot of overtime and did quite well. In August of that year, my cousins got a job to paint a school in Durkozy. A village about 7 kilometers from Sandomir. The pay was good and I joined them together with other painters to make the job. We worked there for several weeks and it was a good experience to work in that village. September 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland and World War II broke out. We had several days of work to finish our job, but we stopped working. We just couldn't concentrate. Our minds were to get home as soon as possible. It was a 7 kilometer walk which usually took one hour to walk, but this time it took several hours. For the first time we saw German silver colored bombers in formations of 3 fly high in the sky. The closer we came to the city we heard bomb explosions coming from the other side of the river. They were bombing railroad tracks and bridges. It must have been a distant of about 3 miles for us. Every time the sirens got off, we had to get to the ditches of the roads for cover. We heard a lot of anti-aircraft fire. We walked through the fields of tomatoes and cucumbers and we filled up our bags to bring home to our families. After one week of war the Germans came close to the outskirts of Sandomir. The Polish Army was caught completely by surprise and quickly disintegrated. Fighting here and there, the polish Army was no match for the German motorized panzer divisions. The poles had some tanks, but mostly artillery drawn by horses. They were also fighting with cavalry on horses. It seemed the German espionage was a decisive factor in the war. In the first days the knew exactly where the polish planes were parked and they were almost all knocked out of service. They dominated completely the skies with no opposition, except in the beginning with anti-aircraft fire. Across the house where we lived about 500 meters away was an electric power station which supplied the city with electricity. It seems the Germans intended to knock it out of service. They dropped one bomb about 300 meters from our house, and the force from that explosion was so great, that almost all the window glass from the city was broken. New glass had to be installed to the windows. My father bought a diamond glass cutter and learned how to cut glass and to install the glass to the windows with tiny nails and putty. Unexpectedly, a new source of income opened up for us. Naturally we practiced first on our windows. We all helped out and my father became then a glassier.

I too, learned to install glass to windows. Later I and my younger brother Chaskel traveled to some villages to install glass to some peasant houses. Keeping some supply of glass in our apartment we also learned to install mirrors and this was also a source of income. 1940 As the Germans continued with the occupation the Jews became more and more the scapegoat of their propaganda. The Jews were blamed for the war and for all the sufferings the Polish people had to endure. Their propaganda minister Julius Streicher painted ugly characteristics and caricatures of Jews with fantastic crooked long noses grinding rats to make frankfurters to sell to the public. Everything to incite the Polish people against the Jews. Each week new laws came out forbidding Jews to travel by train and more a more discriminations and forced money contributions from the Jewish population. They demanded to deliver as many people they needed for forced labor without pay. People were taken for various jobs like cleaning up the roads and highways from snow or unloading freight trains with coal, sand, gravel, cement or

barrels of gasoline and some supplies for the German army. I was then 16 years old and it was not hard for me to work with a shovel, fork, shovel or pick. Fortunately, I was a good worker for this kind of work and this helped me very much through the entire war. People who could not work fast and steady and efficiently were usually beaten and punished. Many times we were required to work in pairs to load or unload freight trains or trucks. Each good worker usually choose as a partner another good worker and the good workers always finished sooner and were allowed to rest up, or were given sometimes extra bread. But the slow workers were always the victims and were beaten by the guards. This was a big factor throughout the war. I don't recall ever being beaten for working slow.

Winter 1940 - I remember it was a severe winter and a lot of snow. One day they demanded the entire Jewish population able body people to go to work and clean up the snow from all the roads and highways to about 15 kilometers outside of the city. Sandomir was a military center and they had to have the roads clean from snow. They provided military trucks and shovels. We worked about 10-12 hours a day. After we finished they took us home with their trucks. Getting on the trucks some people were sitting on the side wall platforms and the rest on the floor. I happened to be from the last ones to climb into the truck so I sat on the rear platform. We were already about 2 miles from the city and suddenly another truck came from a curve from the other direction and collided with our truck. Not head on but sideways. So that all the people who were sitting on the left side were hit on their backs. Five people were killed and many were wounded. Since I happened to sit on the rear platform I came out from the collision only with bloody lips. It was a close call.

Summer 1941 - Our city was located on the edge of the river Wisla and was a station for steam boats traveling to Warsaw. One day, some business people came to my father and suggested to him, that I should travel to Warsaw to buy and bring back some merchandise for them. I was 17 years then and didn't look Jewish, which was an asset then. I traveled by boat to Warsaw and brought merchandise for those people. Warsaw was the main trade center in Poland and business people of course knew the factories and wholesale stores where they ordered the merchandise before the war by mail and got it delivered to them. But all this stopped now. They gave me the orders what to buy and where to buy. I worked on a commission basis 10 to 20 percent. It depended how big the order was. They gave me along order letters and some money for deposits and the balance they paid by mail. On my way to Warsaw I took along some food products like: Butter, hard cheeses and fat geese. These foods were very expensive and were hard to get in Warsaw. I brought this mostly for my relatives. They appreciated it very much. I bought merchandise like; shoemakers tailors, watchmaker accessories, for galanterie stores, hard candies, chocolates, chalva, pepper, cynamon, for colonial grocery stores e.t.c. I brought everything to the place where I stayed, and packed it in wooded boxes and transported it to the boat with me coming along. Usually I had from 500 to 1000lbs of merchandise. When I realized that certain popular items were a good profit to make I brought those items for ourselves to sell and so we built up a business in our home. End of 1941 - Walls were being erected in the Jewish neighborhoods and the Jewish ghetto of Warsaw was being created. I could no more travel to Warsaw and the good period for us came to an end. It was a short period of prosperity for us. We were then a family with seven children and with a grandpa and grandma to feed. Little by little we sold all the

merchandise we had in our house. My father could only earn from work as an electrician or glazier. It was not then steady work. I and my brother Schlomo had to help out. I worked being a painter. My father managed to get me some public work from the Jewish Gemina office. Some work was also private. Things for the Jews went from bad to worse. Every week new restrictions. Gradually the Jewish population from Polish neighborhoods were forced to move into the ghetto. Signs were erected that forbid the Jews to leave the ghetto punishable by death.

July 41 - Germany invaded Russia by surprise, and managed to advance until Moscow and Leningrad. On the western fronts they had already captured most of Europe including France, Belgium, Holland, Norway and Denmark. All the Balkan countries: Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Checkoslovakia including the Baltic States. Winter arrived in 41-42 and the German Victories came to a halt. It was then a very severe winter and the Germans became frozen in. Demoralized and suffering severe casualties they started to retreat. The situation in Poland became worse and worse and again the Jews were blamed for everything. That winter of 1942, they ordered the Jews to bring all their fur coats. They said they need it to be sent to the front in Russia. It was a great joy to see that the German Army could be defeated too. Rumors came out that Hitler decided to exterminate the Jewish People. Young Jews capable to work would be spared for the time being and would be the last ones to be exterminated. Depression dominated the Jewish people not knowing what tomorrow will bring. Spring 1942 - I got a job with the Co. Pohl & Luckel, who were specializing in deepening shallow waters by digging and removing the sand. The Germans had plans to build a side port for steamboats to enter. I was one of the first people to help unpack and to assemble the machine. We were told this was an important project for them and that we'll be safe there. I had a special pass issued to me and stamped by the German authorities that I worked on a important job. But that turned out to be a deceit for the Jews who paid to get this job. July 42 - Two trucks came from the city of Skarzysts to get volunteers for work in the "Hasag" ammunition factory there. Instead of volunteering people hid themselves and did not come out. They then demanded from the Jewish community to deliver the people they needed. I thought since I have a pass with a German stamp that I'll be exempted, but that wasn't so. They said that an ammunition factory is more important. I was ordered to wait at a certain point in the street with police guarding us. to my dismay I saw my father and brother Schlomo being led out from our house by police to the same place where I was waiting. My mother managed to bring out some clothing blankets and pillows. It turned out to be the last time we saw our mother, grandparents and brothers. Their names were: Chaskel-13, Nusn-11 1/2, Chemia-10, Hershel -8 and the youngest Meyer-7 years. They accumulated about 200 people and led us to the big city jail. We slept that night on the bare jail floor. Next morning they marched us to the railway station. I was very worried to have our father go along with us. My father was then 42 years old, but who will take care on mother children at home? Waiting at the railway station my father surprised me. He did something that greatly relieved me, and I was then very proud of him. They needed only 80 people and had about 200 in order to make a selection. They separated the elderly to one side and the strong and younger to the other side. My father happened to be on our side. In a split second when the guards turned their sights away he quickly ran over to the other side taking of course a big chance. They soon marched them back to the city. What a relief it was to see him going back home. It seems they had difficulties

getting us on a train. Soon 2 buses came and took us away on a hectic trip to the Skarzysko "Hasay" factory. As soon as we arrived they searched us and demanded to give to them all the gold and money. They threatened to shoot anyone who will be caught hiding the valuables and the money. We took a chance and did not give away the money. We knew, that for money we'll be able to buy some extra bread. They took us to the camp called Economia. Why they called this name I could never find out. It was a depressing camp. People were beaten for any little offense. This was a big and long hall with a capacity for about 1500 people. People were already living there. In the middle of the hall was long aisle, on both sides of the aisle were 4- story bunks filled up with straw, they called them pritches. They were made so that you could only climb up and slip in. You couldn't even sit up in them. You didn't even have your own place. When we went to work in the morning, we took our belongings with us. And when we returned from work our places from last night were taken already by other people so we had to look for new places every night. There was only one doctor with some help. All you could get was some aspirins. If someone became sick there was a small building for the disabled. From there people seldom recuperated, unless you knew some officials from the camp to help you. Fortunately, we were young and healthy. I don't remember ever getting sick besides rarely a little cold during the entire war. I and my brother were assigned to work with the transport dept. Our work was hard work always in the open air, rain or shine. There was work to unload from freight trains coal, scrap metal, always hard physical work. Sometimes in warehouses to move materials. That was going on for about 4 weeks. Then I got a break when I got to know some painters who lived before in Skarzysko and worked in the painting dept. They arranged for me to see the polish master from the Dept. I had to go through a test to see whether I knew how to paint. The master liked the way I worked and I was accepted to work with the painters. I was soon transferred to a different camp where the painters lived. That was a mile away from the Economia camp. Life became much easier for me. The new camp had small barracks with more humane conditions. The beds were only double beds high. You had a bed for yourself with a strawsack instead of loose straw. And the most important thing you always came home from work to your own bed. Soon, I worked outside the Hasag factory where about 6,000 people about half Jews and half poles worked in 2 shifts. Hasag employed about 9,000 workers. There were 3 separate plants. Work A, Work B, and Work C. The biggest was work A where I worked about 20 percent were women who lived in the Economia, but were housed separately. They had the same conditions as men had and not any better. The plant was about 1- square mile in size, surrounded with a concrete 10 feet high wall and with barbed wire on top. So, to make it harder to escape. But as painters we worked for weeks outside of the plant, painting the apartments of high officials, Engineers and some masters. We were not guarded. A polish supervisor came every morning to the factory to pick us up and after work to bring us back to the plant. From there we were marched by Jewish police and workschutz with rifles to our barracks. My younger brother Schlomo stayed in the Economia. In the meantime in October a new transport with people arrived from Sandomir and among them was my cousin Mendel. Soon I spoke to my friends from Skarzysko about my cousin Mendel, that he is a good painter. They in turn spoke about him to our polish master and it just happened that they were looking for painters. My cousin told me, that my father was taken to Mokoszyn "SS" camp to work there as an electrician. In the beginning he could come home every day, then every week and then when the ghetto was surrounded he couldn't come home anymore. He was with a group of people all workers whom the "SS"

needed for their special works like carpenters, mechanics and an electrician. They were then forbidden to leave the camp under penalty of death. The ghetto in Sandomir, where my mother, grandparents, and my brothers and family were, was surrounded by Polish police and Ukrainians under the SS - command. On October 29, 1942, 5,000 Jews were transported to Belzec with freight trains. They were told they are being transported for work, but we soon found out that Belzec was one of the death camp where the people were all gassed. When they ordered the Jews to leave the houses and come out to street where they marched them to the freight trains, my grandparents who were in their late seventies refused to leave the house. My grandfather put on his white holiday (kitl) coat. He wrapped himself in his tales and kept praying the Thilim. So did my grandmother read the Thilim. They were shot with their Thilims in their hands. The cleanup commandos who collected their bodies told me this latter. It is depressing to write about everything that happened, so I will write only about the most important happenings that I lived through. Gradually we sold all the belongings we had, except the underwear and some shirts coat and extra shoes we had. I remember the last thing I sold was my pillow. Everyday we carried our belongings we had to the factory and back to the barracks. In a way it was easier when we got rid of them not having to carry and to guard such a load. In exchange the poles brought us bread a some other foods. It was forbidden but we did it anyway. Unexpectedly we received some money with a letter from our father through a polish man from the people from the camp Liceum. The Germans kept them there because they needed them to do important work for the German Army. My father wrote about everything what has happened, which I mostly knew already from cousin Mendel. The letter and money we received gave us thoughts to run away from Skarzysko and try to make it back to Sandomir. this was a very risky move to make. Everyday we heard about people who ran away were caught and shot. But my younger brother Schlomo was very daring and made the first decision to run away. I thought because he worked harder than me in the transport dept. and while I was assigned to live with the painters in a different colony with more comfortable conditions, he lived in the Economia Camp. My brother advised me that we should run away too, otherwise he will escape by himself. Within several day I and Mendel decided to run away too. Secretly without telling anybody we prepared for the escape. We sold the rest of our belongings and we were ready to run away. We decided to jump of the fence wall which was around the factory. Since my brother worked with the transport dept. there were warehouses near a fence where they kept some raw materials. At the walls the kept a lot of steal scrap, old discarded machines and other scraps. This was already the end of December winter in Poland. During a snow storm, Schlomo found a ladder, climbed up on the wall and cut the barbed wire at a certain place where there was little traffic. I as a painter was also able to move around the plant. My brother showed me the place on top of the wall. After he cut them, he put it back in place, so from distance you couldn't tell that the wires were cut at a certain place. The decision was that Schlomo would be the first one to go. That would be 5 p.m. when the shifts change and sirens sounded. We thought that would be the most favorable time because of lot of traffic. People come in and people leave the factory. And at 5 p.m. it was already dark. the next day I would leave and the last one my cousin Mendel. We decided to go separately because of the risk involved of being caught together. Our first choice was to go to Sandomir. But if something should go wrong to go to the ghetto of Szydolviec which was the closest to Skarzysko. As we made up, Schlomo was the first one to leave. One day later I climbed over the wall and jumped over about 10 feet high wall. To my luck it was then a heavy snow storm with poor visibility,

which was in my favor. The most critical time then was to make to the road without being observed. It was about 100 yards to a pathway where people were walking back and forth. Everything I did was by instinct. Firstly I crawled over into a ditch where I laid down in the snow. Then I glanced over to the pathway and when I saw not many people walking, I got up cleaned myself up from the snow and merged with other people walking to the main road. I passed a little store where I bought a 2-1sb pumpernickel bread, slipped it into my winter coat which was held by a belt wrapped around my coat. I walked with shoes made with wooden soles. My plan was to walk to the first railway station - Wonchock, about 14 kilometers from Skarzysko, and to take from there a train and travel to Divikozy, which was 7-kilometers from Sandomir. This was the village where we painted the school, and from there I'll walk to the Liceum camp outside of Sandomir. I didn't want to take the train in Skarzysko or arrive into Sandomir station because of the greater risk there of being observed. There were a lot of German Gendarms guarding the bigger railway stations. With the main road going to Wonchock I had to pass the main gate of the Hassay Factory when the factory workschutz guards were standing. But at the time of the shift change, the chance were much better because of the many people going in and out. And so it was, with no problem to pass them by. The snow storm did not let up and I kept walking in the direction of Wonchock. After about 5-kilometers some trouble developed. Snow started to stick and build up on my wooden shoes. Fortunately, I was prepared for this possibility and took along a sharp pointy tool and whenever I had this problem I sat down at the edge of the road and cleaned up the shoes from snow with the tool I had with me. That happened a number of times until I came closer to Wonchock. Suddenly I heard somebody was calling me. Naturally, I was frightened. It was polish man calling and asking me where I am going. I told him I am going to my uncle in Wonchock. He looked me over and at the same time I started to eat from my bread by tearing off pieces. It looked to me that he mistook me for somebody else and walked away. I walked into the village of Wonchock and asked a women directions to the railway station. When I arrived to the station there were several people there. I bought a ticket to Dirkozy, but was told the train is due in 3 hours. Now what do I do in 3 hours? To wait that long I thought would be dangerous. I walked outside and saw 2 toilets. I went back into the station and again to the toilet, until finally there was a whistle from the arriving train. We all went out to the tracks where the train was arriving. The train arrived and I pushed myself into the train, because it was full of people. To my pleasure it was dark inside the train. There was only standing room but who cared. Suddenly at a certain station police in black uniforms came up and started to search and shined everybody with a flashlight to the face. I knew I had be calm and keep my composure. Right of way I started to eat from my bread. They passed by, let into my face and walked by. It seemed to me latter they were probably looking for somebody. It was about 4 o'clock in the morning when I arrived into Divicozy. It was still dark. I decided to walk to the Liceum Camp. It was a 7 kilometer walk, but because snow on the road it took me much longer and I had to walk slow. When I cam closer to the city, I knew I could take a short cut by walking through the fields. But the fields were covered with snow and I couldn't see the paths. I decided then to walk in the direction of the city and then with the city streets to the Liceum. I realized then it was a risk walk to make. It was early morning and as I came closer to the city, I saw about 200 meters in from of me a Polish policemen called Maicher walking with a rifle in the middle of the road going in the direction of the city. Another big danger. I knew him to be a bad guy. I immediately slowed down to keep a greater distance from him. In a little

while he disappeared from my sight. Then as I was walking up the hill towards the city with the Zawichoiska street a woman told me to be careful because the ghetto was surrounded with German Polish and Ukrainian police and another (wyszedenie) expulsion from the ghetto is expected. The expulsion from the 2nd ghetto was January 4, 1943 to Treblinka. After the 1st ghetto was deported to Belzice in October 29, 1942, the Germans established 4 ghettos in the Radom District. Sandomir was one of the four. So was Szydlowiec near Skarzysko. In Sandomir there was 7,000 Jews who were told to come from their hiding places and were promised that from these ghettos will be no more deportations. Not that people were so naive to believe the Germans but when people have no other choice they want to believe maybe the impossible miracle will happen, or maybe would influence or the assassination of Hitler will change the situation. Coming back to my situation I had no choice, no place where to, except to the Liceum Camp. I took up courage and passed outside of the ghetto and went straight to the camp. I came over to the gate where a Jewish policeman was standing. I happened to know him and he asked me if I am coming from the ghetto. I told him that I am coming from Skarzysko and that I want to see my father. I was told that my father is now getting dressed and will soon go to work with his group to Mokoszyn where he works everyday. He told me that he can't let me in through the front gate, that I should sneak in through the rear of the fence. I did what he told me. I met my father and we warmly embraced and kissed. I first asked him about Schlomo and he told me that he didn't come yet. I thought that it could be for some reason, he went first to the Szydlowiec ghetto first? My father told me to hide in the meantime, until he'll be back from work. There was much apprehension in the Liceum because of the situation in ghetto. Every body knew that the liquidation of the ghetto was imminent. The German Gendamerie came to the Liceum and warned not to allow illegals to be there. Everyone caught, will be shot. The camp had only permission for 300 people. The rest were considered illegals. so this made me another illegal. I had always to be on the alert and hide. Sleeping outside of the camp, most nights in potato cellars. We knew well that if caught, it would be the end for us. Sometimes I slept in a stable with horses and sometimes in a barn, where they kept bundles of straw. I realized that I ran away from one fire to another. Three days after my arrival, they liquidated the 2nd ghetto. The only people who were left were some of the Jewish police, the people in command, Mordechai Weisflum, Godl Redelman with their families and relatives. that week almost every night the German Gendamerie made searches for the illegals who were hiding around the Liceum. Whomever they caught hiding was taken to the nearby cemetery and shot. Suddenly, one week after my arrival my brother Schlomo came. It was indeed a great joy and relief to see him again. He told how he jumped the wall with another from Skwarzysko by the name of Sperling who happened to help get my job as a painter. I knew that he was missing but did not know that by coincidence he ran away the same time as Schlomo did. Schlomo told me that Sperling had relatives in Szydlowiec where it was only 20 kilometers from Skarzysko. My brother told me that Mendel was there too. He escaped one day after me. They decided to go separately because for the greater risk. Three days later Mendel also arrived. From one fire to another was our fate to be. As I mentioned there was only 300 people counted every morning as legal. But there were openings at times when some people disappeared from the camp. Then their places were filled in with illegals. some Jews were hiding with Christian families in other villages. But you had to have a lot of money and have good Christian friends who were willing to take the risk and hide you. Naturally you had to pay for the expenses for food and for hiding you. When found Jews hiding they would shoot

the Jews and many times the Christians too for hiding Jews. Or sometimes polish partisans found and shot the Jews and robbed them of their possessions. After the liquidation of the 2nd ghetto a clean up commando was left in the ghetto, to collect the dead and clean up the apartments. Schlomo decided to go to the ghetto and try to be legalized with the clean up commando, and so he took the chance and was legalized in the ghetto. In the meantime I and Mendel were illegals and had to hide, especially in the evenings. One evening I slept with my father in his bed and just that night they made a search for illegals. My father almost covered me with his body and hid me under the quilt cover. The S.S. command of the camp inspected all the beds, but when he came to my fathers bed a Jewish policeman named Wardsky who went along with the S.S. commander was joking about my father who was known to be the only religious man who made his daily prayers with a talis. That's why they nicked named him the Morei Rue (Rabbi) and that's how all the people there called him. Somehow, the S.S. Commander didn't search his bed and another miracle happened. Next evening it was snowing heavily. I was afraid to sleep with my father anymore. The news was out that they were expecting a big (oblava) search for illegals by the German gandamerie. I and Mendel decided to sleep that night across the street in a (stodole) barn full of bundles of straw. The gate of the barn was securely locked and the keys were held by on nearby neighbor. Originally the barn was owned by a Jewish milliner named Avrum Mally. But the Germans confiscated it and transferred the barn to polish people. We climbed up the wall from the rear of the barn through a hole under the roof and we dug ourselves into the bundles of straw. We only took our shoes off so that will try to get some sleep. In the middle of the night we heard loud German voices. We immediately recognized the voices of the German gendarms. Ones name was Shuman and the other I don't remember, but I remember his nickname the horsemen. He was a polish-german folks deutsch. They always walked or rode their horses together. They had a bad reputation for killing Jews. All of a sudden they started to knock on the gates of the barn calling us to come out. We then realized that the snow tracks we left before entering the barn or perhaps somebody informed them that they saw us enter the barn. We then thought that we are lost already, just at the time my cousin Mendel started to cough. I kept on pinching him to stop, that they will discover us. At the same time we dug ourselves in deeper in the straw. Outside they were pounding harder and harder trying to break the lock. Finally we heard a polish women come and speak polish to them and she opened the lock. Fortunately, there was dark inside the barn. There was an isle in the middle and on both sides were piled up high bundles of straw. Firstly they call us to come out from hiding. We tried our best not to move and make any noise. One gendarm climbed up on one side and the other on our side as we were hidden deeper under the bundles of straw. Fortunately again we heard them talk to each other that they had only one flashlight. They were talking to each other that we must be hidden in here. When he lifted up some bundles I could feel the heel of his boot touching my feet but luck again, instead of uncovering us, he covered us even more by throwing more bundles on to of us. Finally, after about searching for about 15 minutes they gave up and left saying to each other that we probably left before they came. After they have left we heard the polish women come and close the gates. That must have been around 1 o'clock after midnight. We felt then like newly born. A little later after they left we heard some pistol shots. We were laying there until 4 o'clock in the morning. We climbed out through the same hole under the roof that we have entered and went inside the Liceum. the lights in kitchen were already on and we entered the kitchen. There were about 50 women in the Liceum camp. Most of them were the wives

of the policemen or officials. Some were employed the laundry room. Some were tailors and some worked in the kitchen. In the kitchen they gave us bread and coffee. they told us that at midnight there was an (oblava) search and they found 2 boys who escaped from Skarzysko. One name I still remember by the name of Schlomo Kandel. They lead them to the cemetery and shot them there. Those were probably the shots we heard in the barn. After we heard that Schlomo was legalized in the ghetto, we decided to do the same and try our luck there. The ghetto was not guarded then, and it was no problem to get inside. The house where we used to live was off limits to enter but we sneaked in there anyway. It was depressing to see our apartment with empty walls, but we could see nothing of our furniture there. During the 2nd ghetto other people lived there. We went to the building where the Jewish police and officials lived. We had there a cousin by the name of Hershel Wasser and his inlaw happened to be one of the chief officials in the ghetto by the name of Godl Redelman. We asked our cousin Hershel the best way to become legalized to work with the clean up commando. He told us we should go ourselves to Godl Redelman and tell him the story that we cam from Skarzysko and we have nowhere to go. We should cry for him and beg him to help us become legalized. He told us that we should in the morning appear at the Jewish police station. He told us, we are going at our own risk. He can't give us any guarantee what will happen. They assembled each morning to go to work. The master gendamerist Leshar a big heavy vicious fat man comes there to look over the people. The sadist Leshar who bragged that he himself killed 1500 Jews was later after there were no more Jews left in Sandomir killed by polish partisan in the marked place in Sandomir. They fired 5 bullets into his beg fat belly. We were advised by Jewish policeman whom we knew, that we should not say that we came from Skarzysko, but say that we hid ourselves in the ghetto. And that is how it was. In the morning as we lined up the police station Leshar appeared smiling. He quickly looked us over. we were about 50 people lined up. He immediately pointed with his finger to me and Mendel asking where do we come from.

We told him that we hid ourselves in the ghetto and that we want to work. Nearby stood the policeman Avrum Wasserman who knew us well cam to our help. When Leshar pointed his finger to us. Wasserman spoke out loudly look how smart he is meaning Leshar that he immediately recognized us. He said that he knows me to be a good worker and painter and that Mendel is a good painter. Leshar knew already Mendel because he painted once before in the Gendameie building and he said ya ya. We soon got an apartment in one of the houses which were assigned for the workers. We got pillows, quilts and dishes whatever we needed. We were legalized and could now rest up in the evenings. We found money, food and clothing. Everyday we went to work, like cleaning up the ice from the ghetto streets the buildings around. Sometimes we went to work to the railroad station to unload cement and other things. We like to work there because the gave us very good and tasty foods like noodles with plenty meat or other tasty soups with plenty of bread. The railroad station had their own kitchen thats why their food was so good. However, in the ghetto the work was not hard. We were however warned not leave the ghetto by ourselves. Despite the warning my brother Schlomo one day left the ghetto and went to see our father in the Liceum and to find out whats going on over there.

He was away for 3 days. When he came back he was immediately locked up by the Jewish police. I was told this was the order of the Gendamerie. Leshar observed in the morning that he was missing for several days and nobody knew where he was. So the order was to detain him. The room where he was locked up had steel bars in the windows. We knew that his fate was sealed when the Gendameria will get him. But my brother found a way to escape. He

tore down some boards from the ceiling. Climbed up to the attic and through the chimney he got to the roof and jumped down to the ground (the building was only one story high) and run away from the ghetto never to come there back. Next day everybody was talking about the daring escape. For a while I thought they would call em and ask me questions but they never did. I later found out that he was hiding aront the Liceum for one week. But later my father was able to legalize him when some people from the 300 escaped, so they used him as a fill in to the 300 legals. Naturally, it cost some money too. My father also arranged to take him along to Mokszyn as an electricians helper for which he had experience already. The gendameit Leshner knew us already well and knew everyone in which house he lived. One day I and Mendel had a little cold and we stayed home in our beds. We had several thousand zlotys (40 zlstys bought a big loaf of bread) and Mendel counted the money in his bed. I was laying in the upper bed. Naturally, the door was locked from the inside. Suddenly the door burst open and in came the beast - Leshner. At that moment Mendel lifted up the mattress and threw the money under it. but Leshner notices this and demanded to pick up the mattress asking (was hast du verstect) what did you hide? Mendel picked up the matress pulled out themoney and put it in front of him. Then he asked how many thousands? And Mendel counted in front of him in 100 zloty bills - 7000. He then asked why we are laying in the beds and we told him that we are having colds. He then left without touching the money. we realized that he wanted to see whether it was a gun that we hid. When we told the chiefs of the ghetto Weisblum and Redelman what happended with us, they could hardly believe taht he didn't take away the money. June-43 we got the news that we re going to be evacuated to the Metan factory in Karmien. About 5 kilometers from Sandomir. There was a glass factory to be dismantled and shipped with all the machines and parts to Pistrikov, a city which was incorporated into the German Reich. We were there about 150 people. The work there was very hard but we managed. We slept in one big room but everybody had a bed wit pillows and quilts which we brought along from the ghetto. We had sufficient food to eat. For money we could buy some extra bread or fruits. Somehow we managed quite well. We were there for about 3 months and then we finished the job. One day 2 "S.S." men came from Mokoszyn where my father and Schlomo worked they asked for me and another man Schmul Wasser to be transfered to Mokoszyn that we were needed for special work. I understood right away from a friend of my father Hershel Glasman who knew these "S.S." people. But instead of Mokoszyn they brought us to the Liceum Camp. I thought that this was a legal transfer but tomorrow I found out that this was a fake. Early next morning when the apel count was on and groups of people were being led away to their work including my father and brother to their work. The "S.S." commander called me and others to stand aside and commanded the Jewish police to guard us. The police told us that they are liquidating the last of the ghetto and also the camp from Kamien. They are all scheduled to go to Pionki a factory of explosives and that we'll join this transport. I immediately decided to run away and not go to Pionki. I slipped away from our group and left the Liceum. I had no idea where to go. I only knew that I have to distance myself from the Liceum, stay away for the day and in the evening I'll sneak back to the camp. It was around August and the corn in the fields was already high. I walked away a distance of about 1/2 of a kilometer. I walked through a path between 2 fields and walked into the corn about 30 meters from the path and laid down to rest. It was about 11 o'clock before noon. I remember it was a hot day. I was laying there for about 3 hours. Then I hear people in German, and as they were nearing in my direction I slowly raised my head to see who it is and to my surprise I saw the 2

German gendorms, Schuman and his partner the horseman walking with the same path I walked and a German shepherd dog running in front of them. At that moment I thought this is my end, the dog will surely find me out. I stretched out as flat as I could, with my face downward touching the ground. I took another glance sideways and I saw the dog running about 5 meters from the path and I looked down to the ground again. Then the Germans passed and were distancing themselves away from me. That was surely one of the greatest dangers I survived. Later, people told me that a dog has to be given an order to search and to sniff out. Apparently the dog had no such order. I continued to lay there until sunset, kept on thinking what to do next? I had 2nd thoughts about going back to the Liceum the same day. Instead I decided to go to the river Wisla which was about 2 kilometers away and would sleep over there in the bushes. That turned out to be the worst decision I ever made. It almost cost me my life. As I left the fields and walked to the first road crossing the zawichost road I saw 2 gendarms riding on their horses from a big distance towards the direction where I was going to cross the road. I immediately turned around and run as fast as I could back to the fields. It was about 3 small city blocks. While I was running, some polish young children 7-8 years watched me running. As soon I came to the fields I made a left turn leading a little upwards and saw a field of potatoes and some tall vegetables and immediately dived into the tall vegetables, a spot I thought to be the best place to hide. Fortunately, it was then getting darker and darker and so did the visibility. Moments after I stretched out in the vegetables, the gendarmes came riding on their horses running down back and forth searching where I am running. It got already very dark and they finally gave up and they left. I laid there for several hours and was thinking back what actually happened. They probably saw me from a distinct that I turned around and began running but the street was a steep angle and they couldn't make their horses run as fast as they wanted them to run and this gave me the extra seconds I needed to run away. After resting up for several hours I thought I'll move closer to the camp and stretching out in the cornfields where the ground was much more comfortable to lay than in the vegetable field. An so I did, got up slowly, little by little, even when the night was quite dark except for the moonlight, I came closer to the Liceum. I stretched out deep in the cornfield. I thought around 3 a.m. I'll enter the camp. The women in the laundry room are already preparing the wash by that time. I laid in the cornfield until around 3 a.m. A good thing was that I had a watch and could see the time. At 3 I got up and got in through the rear fence and knocked lightly on the window of the laundry room. They opened the rear door of the building to let me in. I told them what happened with me and they told me who was shot that day on the cemetery. A man I knew a tailor from the last in the ghetto who didn't give up a bottle of whiskey which he kept in the pocket of his jacket for that he was shot, his name was Leibele Kogut. I asked them to give me some food. I didn't eat or drink during the entire day. I cleaned myself from the dirt. I washed myself and they gave me a shirt and some clothing until they'll wash and dry mine. they showed me a place where I can lay down and rest up until the morning. In the morning I saw my father and brother and told them what happened that day. He told me to hang around in the neighborhood and hide myself for several days. Several days later my father told me some good news. Several people from the camp disappeared again and that he is trying to get me legalized. My father was successful and with some luck and some money I became legal. A new life opened up then for me. I went everyday with a group to work. No more hiding and fear for the time being. The work was road building. The work was with a pick and shovel and was not hard work. We had only one Jewish policeman with us and we took it easy. There was plenty food

to eat in the villages and for money we bought all the food we wanted and brought much of it back to the Liceum. In the villages around the Germans requisitioned land to build new roads. Work in villages as I said was pleasant. We made our work but we were not guarded. Some of us who knew how to sing sang for us songs to make for us more pleasant. Like talking politics, telling each other jokes. That is the nature of the Jewish people. Even under the worst conditions if not guarded they like to tell jokes even about their own misery. At that time something serious happened in the Liceum. There were 2 electricians in the Liceum. My father who worked outside of the camp, in the "S.S." camp-Mokoszyn and the other whose name I don't remember was in charge of the Liceum Camp itself. One day, somebody must have informed on him that he is hiding in secret a radio to which some leaders of the camp were listening to the news of the world. This was strictly forbidden by the German authorities. The "S.S." and "S.D." went into their headquarters in Radom. The "S.D." secret police soon came over to investigate and they arrested the entire Jewish leadership and sent them to Auschwitz Extermination camp. There were 6 people arrested. The electrician who was hiding the radio, the chief leaders: Mordechi Weisblum, Godl Redelman, Chaim Grinberg, Avrum Wasserman and Kopel Wasser. All of them died in the gas chambers except Kopel Wasser who lives now in Canada and Avrum Wasserman whom I saw in Australia during my visit there in 1956. The Liceum was left then without leadership. The "S.S." commandant soon elected a former officer from the Polish army Gabriel Fortgang to be the new leader of the liceum. He was made a Jewish policeman who led us to work to build new roads in the villages. But this lasted only for about 2 months. Then came an order, that 100 people will go to Radom. I and Schlomo were on the list to go, because we were not from the originals but only fill ins to be legalized. Radom was known to be one of the better camps. We were to be employed in the factory "Bron" The German firm was known as "Steuer Daimlor Puch" where pistols machine guns and all sorts of rifles were made. We decided to go there (the hiding and being illegal was too much for us already to go through again.) We realized that sometimes it is better to be legal in a good camp than not having where to sleep over and to hide yourself continuously. Except, when you have a possibility to join a partisan group in the woods and be organized as a fighting unit against an enemy who wants to destroy you. At least then you have a chance to fight back with a gun in your hands. But to hide yourself among the population you have to face 2 enemies. One was the German Nazi beast and the anti-Semites in Poland who also wanted to destroy the Jews. They gave us a day to prepare. We packed in an orderly fashion our belongings like a pillow, 2 blankets, underwear towels and whatever we had to wear. My father had some gold coins: 1-20 dollar gold coin and 10-5 Russian rubbel gold coins. At that time one 20 dollar gold coin was worth 5-5 Russian rubbel gold coins. He gave us the 20 dollar gold coin and 5-5 Russian rubbel gold coins. The 20 dollar coin I hid inside my shoe. And the 5-5 rubbel coins I put inside metal buttons I was wearing with my sweater. You just couldn't tell that inside these metal buttons were gold coins. These gold coins proved later to be a life saver for me. My father was then 43 years old. We parted with embraces and kisses. This was the last time that we saw our father. Being in Radom I found out that the Liceum Camp was liquidated and that my father was then transferred with a group to the Kiele "Hasag". He even managed to send us through a Polish messenger the last letter from him. After the war I found out that he was later moved to the "Hasag Co" in Czenstehowa-Poland and then to Buchenwald Concentration camp in Germany and later when the Russian front was nearing he was sent with a death march from Buchenwald, where he probably died during the march. He was then 45

years old. In November trucks came from Radom and they transported us to the camp of the weapons factory in Radom. We met there some relatives of ours. Those were the Weisfeld family the parents and 2 daughters and son Shulim. They told us about the camp and the kind of work being done in the factory. I told them that I could work as a painter and my brother as an electrician. They told me that they know a Jewish policemen who is in charge of that group from the building dept. and marches that group everyday to and from the factory back to the camp. My cousin Mordechai Weisblum promised me to find him right of way and talk to him about us. Their friend the policemen told our cousin that next day he'll talk to the polish masters about us. Next day after they came back to the camp he told my cousin that the polish master are willing to test us and see for themselves whether we can do the work. The policemen said if accepted it will cost us some money, that he'll have to give to the polish masters as a gift without anybody to know it. Of course we accepted this deal. Life was much easier when you succeeded to work at your trade. Next day, the masters tested us and accepted us to work in their department. We were very thankful then to our cousin Weisfeld for doing us this favor. We had always opportunities to walk all over the factory because of the nature of our trades. In the beginning we lived together in the same barrack. But soon they transferred him to live together with the electricians which was at the other end of the camp. This I think proved later to be beneficial to me. In the meantime the war was not going any good for Germany on the he Russian front. In January 1943 they suffered a decisive defeat at Stalingrad and this proved to be the turning point of the war. Since Stalingrad the Germans were forced to retreat on all fronts, east and west until they lost the war. Naturally, we all in the camp rejoiced to hear and read secretly the good news and many people thought that perhaps the war will end soon. But this was not to happen. The German propaganda were as ever blaming the Jews for all the bad thing that's happening to Germany like the bombing of the German cities, for bringing America into war against Germany. For the Lend and Lease America was giving to Russia and for supplying England with war materials. They kept on with their propaganda against the Jews if the Jews were actually leading all the governments in the world against Germany. Every day conditions against Jews in the camps became worse. We heard from polish people about German atrocities against Jews in Treblinka, Auschwitz, Majdonek, Belzec, Sobibor e.t.c. We started to think about the possibility of running away from camp and join the partisans in the woods to fight the German supply lines. But that always turned out to be a illusion, because the polish partisans did not accept Jews to be among their ranks. Especially on the western side of the river Wisla. It might not have been official polish policy because would opinion would have condemned such a discrimination. So the rank and file came out with different by laws that you had to bring your own weapons in order to be accepted. There were a lot of anti-Semites in the polish partisans who called themselves "Armia Kraiewa" National Army. We knew of many cases where Jews from the camps volunteered to serve with the polish partisans who came with their weapons and were required to give their weapons first for inspection then after they turned in for inspection they were all shot. I don't believe this was done with official orders from the top. But it was war and officers of lower rank, probably some anti-Semites did this on their own hands. I will mention a case where this happened. In the city of Ostowiec about 30 miles from Sandomir about 30 young boys and some girls, the best from the city volunteered to join the polish partisans. They came with their own guns to a nearby forest where the partisans lived. They were all accepted to serve, then were told as a matter of policy to turn in their weapons first for inspection. After they turned in the weapons

they were all shot except for one who succeeded to escape and tell the story. It was a crime done by people from the same hometown. Many of them were tried and convicted after the war by a Russian Court. so that is why Jews were hesitant to run away from the camps. But my brother Schlomo was not resting. The German Army was suffering one defeat after another. They were being pushed back from all of Russia. The factory was also surrounded with a big concrete wall and barbed wire on top. My brother got an idea. In a remote place in the factory where there was not much traffic there was a sewer canal which led to the outside of the factory.

Schlomo removed the top cover and he saw another grated cover inside. One day when it was raining he entered the canal and with a hacksaw blade cut through the steel bars, so by lifting the inside cover one could enter the canal and crawl or walk through to the outside of the factory. My brother told me that he put back the cover neatly in its place. Naturally somebody was on the watch outside and when nobody was around he gave him a signal to come out. Schlomo showed me the place. That, should it become necessary I should know a route to escape. Schlomo told me later about another route they already made from the camp. In the barracks under his bed they cut through the wooden floor an opening to get beneath the barrack. From the wooden floor they cut through and they made a cover. So when the cover was lifted, you could lower yourself under the barracks. It was of course all done in secret. Three boys lowered themselves beneath the barrack and dug a tunnel about 60 yards long which led to the outside of the camp. They had electric lights installed which Schlomo fixed up for them from a hidden connection line in the barrack. Naturally, when the time to escape will come they would just have to dig through an opening to the outside. One day four people 3 boys and one girl were missing from camp. Supposedly they ran away from camp, but actually they lowered themselves to the tunnel where they stayed for 2 months. They were secretly given down food and necessary things. My brother told me all about it on the condition to keep it secret and when the time will come we'll escape through this prepared tunnel. My brother was very daring and unafraid. Unfortunately he later paid with his life for that, and here is what happened. As I mentioned before they were producing pistols and rifles in the factory. He and other people decided to steal the parts and assemble them later. Their plan was when the time for the escape will come they will run away with the weapons and join the partisans who did not accept people without weapons. Even when I always mentioned to my brother that there were many cases that the polish partisans took away the weapons for supposedly for inspection and then shot them. My brother said they would try and cross the river and join the Russian partisans where they accepted Jews to the partisans, but many units also required to bring along weapons before being accepted to the partisans. One day, one boy was noticed by an Ukrainian guard that something bulky object was behind his coat. When the guard searched him he found some part of a weapon he hid. They handed this boy over to the "S.D." police in Redom, and they probably tortured him to give out the names of others involved. They soon arrested Schlomo and 5 other boys. Together they arrested 7 young boys several weeks went by and we didn't know what happened to them. We only knew that they were being interrogated and kept in jail there. I walked around in the factory doing my job but kept thinking being Schlomo's brother I may be called for questioning. But that never happened. First of all I didn't know anything about the weapons. We lived in different barracks, except what I knew about the tunnel under his bed. It seems that my brother kept me completely out of this assuming they probably tortured him while being interrogated. One day when I was walking through the plant and carrying some paint I noticed Schlomo passing me with a tall "S.D." secret police at his side.

He took a glance at me and I at him and this was the last time I have seen him in my life. I found out later that all seven were shot in a public square in Radom. Some people and friends told me that this was only a rumor but I realized that the people who said this just wanted to make me feel better. After the war I found out again that this was not a rumor. It was then indeed true. The news of the German defeats reached us continuously. On June 6, 1944 the allies invaded Normandy and a 2nd front was established pushing the Germans out of France and advanced into Germany. Until that time we were walking in civilian clothing. but they now changed our clothes to gray and blue striped uniforms and made our camp a concentration camp. As the front moved closer to us, we knew that the liquidation of our camp is imminent. They just would not allow us to be liberated by the Russian Army. In the meantime something happened inside the camp. A horse wagon with a load of sand passed by the street outside the camp and the wheels of the wagon sank in. They immediately became suspicious and notified the SS commander from the camp. They started to dig and found the tunnel with the people inside. They called out all the people outside on the field. We thought they'll be shot or hanged in public for us all to see, like they used to do before for an offense like this. But this time the tree boys and the girl got 50 lashes each. They had to wear special coats with yellow patches on both sides of the coats. They were later separated from us and sent to another camp. I don't know what happened to them later. I had then a friend by the name of Samek Goldberg. he was from a fine and rich family. He got the job as my helper. He wasn't a painter but got the job through influence and some money. He happened to be a very intelligent and nice boy. I was then 20 years old, strong and healthy. He told me he would like to run away to some Christian people he knows and his family know from before the war. Samek's father had a shoe store in Radom and they left a lot of shoes with this Polish family. Samek had a father Ahron Goldberg and also a younger brother in camp. I told him that I am also thinking of escaping through a canal that my brother prepared if necessary to run away. He was very interested and suggested to me to escape together with him to hide with this Polish people or it may be with other Polish people that he knows and that he has enough money to pay for hiding. As I said his father and brother did not want to run away, and said whatever will be with the other Jews will be with them. They told Samek, however if he wants to and I wanted to go with him would be all right with them. But I became skeptical and told him that I share the same thoughts with his father. So he told me he will then go by himself. Those were the last days in Radom. The Russian Army came closer and closer. They occupied already the city of Lublin which was on the other side of the river Wisla, about 80 kilometers from Radom actually advanced to the river Wisla and stopped there. They then turned north and moved towards Warsaw. They crossed the river Wisla and one month later and captured the city of Sandomir in August, 1944. We didn't do any more work. The Germans we observed were packing in haste. The most important machines were being taken away. It was our last day in the factory. My friend Samek did what he said he'll do. he said good bye to me and disappeared into the canal. In 1945 I found out from his father who survived the war in the camps that Samek was later shot by the Polish police after he was caught in Radom. the next day they assembled the entire population from the camp and marched us away from Radom. We were walking for several days toward Tomashov. I carried with me 2 blankets some underwear in a Rucksack, and the most important possession a big menaske a big deep pot with a wire handle to carry with you to eat or drink. I had it always attached to my belt. Also spoons a knife and a metal cup to drink. This dish I guarded and remained with me until the war was over. we marched over

100 kilometers about some 30 kilometers a day until we reached Tomashov. I have seen during the march a number of people trying to run away or simply trying to mix with the poles being shot and killed without any warning. I had then a friend by the name Israel Silberberg. We stuck together until the end. We knew each other from Sandomir. He was several years older than me. We developed then such a friendship that we shared everything we ate until the end. It was then very necessary to have a friend and not to walk alone as some others did. One helped the other and that was very important to survive. We got one larger portion of bread for the entire march to Tomashow. We found some apples in the ditches of the road and this helped out very much. In Tomashow we got our bread rations a slice of 10 decos of bread plus the apples we found in the ditches were very helpful. They then marched us to the railway station and into freight trains destination Auschwitz. We knew already that Auschwitz was a death camp where they gassed people. We were all depressed to know that we were being taken there. After almost a full day of traveling we arrived into Auschwitz. we heard a lot of music being played there. We soon found out from the people who were busy working that the music being played is to feed the people while others were being gassed in crematoriums. We were unloaded and marched to a place where we made to stand in formation for several hours, until trucks came with a number of "S.S." guards and some high officials from the camp to make a selection from our transport. They said that the working age people will be transported to work camps in Germany. And for the elderly and young ones below the age of 16 they have employment in Auschwitz. We all knew what this meant, to be taken to the crematoriums and gassed. I'll never forget that scene the young boys cried and begged the "SS" guards to leave them with their parents and that they are able to do all kin of works, but to no avail. They were beaten and pushed to climb up into the trucks. It was very heartbreaking to see them being driven away, which we all knew where. They gave us bread rations with a slice of bologna and sweet coffee. We saw some Jewish policeman walking by us. they told us what's happening in Auschwitz and that we are lucky to survive the selection which is being made to every transport of Jews going through Auschwitz for work in Germany. We were there for about 8 hours. Then we were loaded again into freight trains and were told that we are being taken to Germany to work there. We were told this by our "S.S." commander from Radom, who accompanied us on the entire trip to Germany. We believed what he told us that we are going to Weihingen a place near Stuttgart. To a place where they are building a new underground factory. We were not only men in our transport. The women were separated from the men in Auschwitz and were sent to woman camps in Germany. We arrived in Weihingen after traveling 3 days by train. To our surprise they took us first to Vienna, Austria and from there to Linz-Austria where they put us on a regular coach train trip through Germany and to Weihingen. We were thinking then perhaps for opinion they made us travel in coach trains and that in Germany we may be treated better. But this turned out to be an illusion. Whatever the Nazis did was to fool the Jews and the World when we arrived in Weihingen with 1,200 people that this resembled somewhat Skarzysko. These were barracks with 2 story bunks. No individual sacks of straw like in Radom, but loose straw on benches not beds. Meaning no privacy. Everybody near each other. But unlike the Economy in Skarzysko we kept the same places each day we were in small barracks mostly from the same city and we tried to be together. Next day, to work! We marched about 2 miles each to work and 2 miles home from work. And we realized this was hard work blasting rocks deep into the grounds. they were building an underground factory to be safer for them from airplane bombing. It was

amazing to note that they had no intention of giving up the war effort or the main reason was to keep up their morality? or both? They kept blasting the rocks deeper and deeper. We had to load the rocks into lorries little wagons on tracks and push them outside the factory area and unload them. It turned out to be a hectic place to work and live there. In September time the grounds in the camp were muddy. They decided to build some roads and pathways in the camp. They ordered everyone who comes home from work to carry with him a big rock. But to carry a heavy rock for 2 miles was a very difficult task. Naturally we cheated a bit, picking out the flat and thinner rocks. For sometime we got a way with it. One day I was out of luck when I carried such a flat rock. There was just that day an inspection where the "S.S." men were waiting at the gates at the time we arrived from work. They looked over everybody rock and my rock was too small for them. The punishment was 50 lashes on your back. I watched the S.S. man whip first the bigger guys with 50 lashes. You could hear the groaning from the pain. Then came my turn. They counted 25 lashes and a Jewish policeman who knew me pleaded with the S.S. man that this should be enough for me and they let me go. When I came to the barrack I was in pain. My friends looked over my body to see it all swollen from the whip marks. They rubbed in my body with some oil. I had difficulties sleeping that night. But after several days I recuperated. This was the only and most painful whipping I received during the war. The condition there, were not good. We worked in 2 shifts. A night shift and a day shift. 12 hours each shift. When I had my choice I always preferred the day shift. Even at night the work was easier. the winter came and we had only a thin winter coat to wear. But we helped ourselves by putting in the 2 blankets we had under the thin winter coat we had. One blanket like a Thalies under the coat and the other we wrapped around under the pants. In difficult times, you get all kind of ideas to help yourself. We even took an empty cement bag cut out a hole from the bottom for the head to go through and we cut out the corners of the bag for the hands to go through and we used the bag as a shirt on top of your own shirt. Sometimes we used 2 such shirts it depended how cold it was. Fortunately, I sold the 20 dollar gold coin I had. A 20 dollar coin was worth 25 golden rubles. I sold the 20 dollar coin and got back 15 gold rubles for 10 gold rubles I got 15 loafs of bread and that was very helpful. It was around November and they called for volunteers to go to a different camp. I and my friend Isrel Silberberg decided to go and we signed up to go. We were disgusted with the conditions in Weihingen and decided whatever will be will be. We found out that one of the former commanders in Radom who was comparatively not such a vicious man like the others was coming along with us to the new camp in Hesenthal. Also going along were some well known Jewish policemen. This gave some courage to take a chance and go along. Many people who became sick died in Weishingen. Fortunately, I was then 20 years young and healthy. I don't remember having ever had a bad cold through the entire time when I was in different concentration camps. You also had to know how to take care of yourself to keep warm and to be disciplined with the food. Meaning when you got your daily bread portion not to eat it up at once but to divide it in 3 portions for the day. This was a very difficult task to live by for most people. Again they transported us 600 people by passenger train to Hesenthal near Schwabish Hall a city not far from the French border. To run away was impossible because we were wearing stripped clothes which everybody knew was being worn by concentration camp inmates and escapees would be caught immediately. In the camp Hesenthal there were 2 work places. One was at the Heesthal Airfield. A military airfield where there were stationed many planes of all types. It was a long march to go to work there and it was a risky place to work because of

the allies almost daily bombings. Usually during daytime American bombers in formation of these about 12 or 15 at a time. They were flying very high in the sky. They dropped their bombs on the airfield runways and we continuously had to repair the airfield and the roads around it. We were continuously guarded by soldiers of the Air Force. There were fields around with vegetables and fruit trees. I remember one day, a man tried and got into the field to get (a corpol) a big white radish. The German guard near me kneeled down and shot him from behind through his back killing him instantly. Actually we couldn't do much work, because of the continuous air alarms. The other work place was in a stonemill in Schwabish Hall. There was a big Stonebruck where they blasted out the rock. We chopped it with big sledge hammer into smaller pieces, loaded them on small lores who were on tracks and pushed them to the mill which chopped them to small pieces for road building. We also worked by blasting out tunnels in the hills for air raid shelters for the civilian German population. Every time there was an air raid the tunnels got filled up with people. But the tunnels were at the bottom of the hill and we worked most of the time on the top of the hill. but they never dropped any bombs there. It was hard work every time to load about 10 cars with rocks. But the owner understood in order to do good work, we must eat good. He happened to have his own farm where he grew potatoes and he brought every other day boiled potatoes for his workers. Everybody got about 10 potatoes. Sometimes he also brought some bread for the better workers. This job required only 40 workers daily. It was not easy to get to work on this job. I got to know through a friend the Jewish policemen and offered him a 5 rubel gold coin if he could get me and my friend Isrul Silberberg to work there. The Jewish policemen was in charge of that group. He said all right, but we have to wait for an opening when somebody will get sick or disabled. And so it was. Soon I went to work there and a little later also my friend Silberberg. I gave him the gold coin. The policemen was a nice guy and gave in addition 5 breads to the deal we made. Life for us became easier. We were not hungry anymore while we worked on the new job. The potatoes we got plus the extra bread was very helpful to us. We worked there almost until the liquidation of the camp. Two weeks before the liquidation my friend Isrul became ill with disenteria. A stomach illness that makes you run to the toilet. Getting no medical treatment, his condition deteriorated from day to day. he could not go to work anymore and stayed in the barrack. We slept in a 2 story bed with me on the top. I remember one day he couldn't eat anymore. At 9 p.m. we had to be in bed because the lights were turned off. I got up as usual 4:30 a.m. in the morning getting ready to go to work. We got our bread rations. He gave me his portion because he could not eat anymore only drink. I went to the kitchen to get some coffee. he told me he is very thirsty and I should bring him coffee. I went to the kitchen to get some coffee. He told me his very thirsty and I should bring him coffee. I went to the kitchen again with my big pot. I succeeded then to get almost a full pot of coffee for him. There was then a big rush of people because the coffee that day was sweet. In the big rush I was pushed and fell down and spilled the coffee. During the entire war, which took 5 long years I never cried, even though I have seen many people killed. I was somewhat hardened and couldn't cry. But this time when I came back with my empty pot to face my friend instead of explaining I burst out crying. He saw my empty pot and understood. Then I explained what has happened. Several days latter as the French Army moved closer they did not send us to work anymore, except when there was one day of heavy bombings by the American bombers destroying the entire railway station of Schwalsish Hall. We had to go and work day and nights to repair the railways tracks. But soon they were destroyed again. In the meantime my friend was moved

to the U Barrack in the camp. This was a barrack for the disabled and from there without getting any medical treatment almost nobody came out alive. I went everyday to see my friend. One day he called me over that I should take his bread portion, otherwise of the helping people there will take it away. I remember he could hardly speak, but managed to tell me that he is very sick and that he would probably die that night. Next day I found out that he did die. I could not understand then how people could know when they are going to die. Several days later, when we heard already the French artillery fire from a distance they quickly loaded us into a freight train, connecting it to another transport train with Hungarian Jews from another camp. Our destination we were told was Dachau deep inside Germany about 300 kilometers away. After we traveled for about 40 kilometers traveling there was an air raid. The American bombers destroyed the railways we were supposed to pass. The German guards were angry and told us to dismount from the train, and started to march us by foot to Dachau, which turned out to be a death march from 800 people who started the march only about 250 arrived to Allach-Dachau. We marched for 6 days until they could find for us another train to Dachau. We marched about 30 kilometers a day. Sometimes we stopped to rest for a few hours. At nighttime when we passed villages we slept in barns. Many nights however, we slept in open fields. Many people died from exhaustion and hunger. The Jewish police and a group of about 60 strongest and healthiest which we called Feleks group were the front marchers and I knew if I could keep up and march together with them I'll have a chance. It was very hard to keep marching with that group but I managed to march with them. Whenever we passed a village the Jewish police with some "S.S." guards went to the peasants and asked for some food and bread for us because we didn't get any rations, but all the others who couldn't keep up with us were walking with long stretches behind us and didn't get any food and many died from hunger or exhaustion. People who couldn't walk anymore tried to rest in the ditches along the roads were many times shot. At one point after marching for 2 days without any food I was hungry and decided to go by myself to a house or farmer and ask for food. For the last 2 days I left Feleks group and decided to step out and try by myself to get some food. After I slowed down marching with the front group and was left behind walking by myself. By then I had thrown away some things I carried except the 2 blankets and my pot I carried on the belt around me. Walking by myself I saw from a distance a German soldier standing with a girl at the side off the road. I took up courage went straight to them and spoke in German that I am from the transport who just past by that I am very hungry. They were very polite to me especially his girlfriend. They told me they have no food with them except some candies. I accepted it and thanked them. It was almost midnight and I kept on walking. I then went into a ditch at the side of the road and stretched out to rest with my face facing downward making believe that I am dead. Some more people marched by with the guards following them. I waited a while until they all passed me. I got up and walked off the road into the fields. It was quite dark in the fields and I kept walking looking for a farm or a house to go in and ask for food. I saw from a distance a house with the lights on. It must have been 1/2 kilometer distance. I walked over the fields to the house and entered from behind into the backyard of the house. A dog started to bark as I went closer to the house. I looked down to the basement and saw people woman and soldiers, eating and drinking. As I came closer a man came over to me and asked me what I want and who I am? He could see from the striped clothing I was wearing that I am from a concentration camp. I told him I was very hungry and asked if they could give me some bread. He brought out a big chunk of black bread and said he is taking me to the Burgermeister

(village chief). I started to eat the bread and he told me to walk. He grabbed me by the collar and lead me out to the road. After walking a while I asked him to let me loose and I will find and join the transport by myself, but he refused to let me loose and we noticed a guard with a rifle walking on the road. He led me to the guard and told him all about me. That I came to his house begging for bread. the guard told him that he'll take care on me. The German walked away and the guard talked to me in polish and I saw right of way that he was an Ukrainian from a different unit, he shouted at me, you'll go into German houses to liter and ask for food? I'll shoot you like a dog. I thought then that my end has come. We walked for about 1 kilometer, during the walk he kept on repeating that he'll shoot me. we finally came to a large field. I saw a big light from a reflector shining over people from our transport who were laying on the ground covered with blankets. He brought me to the center of the field walking up a little hill to report to the commander about me. he left me behind about 25 meters and told me to wait there. While he was going up to the commander to make the report about me, I saw my chance, and quickly sneaked in among the other people who were all laying on the ground covered with blankets. I stretched out close to them covering myself with my blankets. In seconds I heard the Ukrainian guard coming back and looking for me, cursing and searching in polish vulgar language. But he couldn't find me, because I was laying on the ground covered with my blankets like all the others. I then realized I had another close call. while laying on the ground I kept on eating bread I got from the German house. I still had some left to spare for later. We got up early in the morning. they brought in water from a nearby village which we all needed very much. We then marched a whole day through some German cities we saw German trucks with soldiers passing us back and forth. It looked they were in a disarray. It was the feeling that the end of the war was coming closer. But not for us, for the time being. Unexpectedly, that day they found a freight train for us. It was about over 100 kilometer to Dachau. We went to the railroad station in one city which I don't remember the name of it. We went into covered freight wagon. I quickly succeeded to occupy a space near the wall of the wagon. I laid down and fell asleep. When I woke up we were on our way to Dachau. We traveled a whole night. That was the best time for trains to travel then, because of the he daily air raids. Dachau is located about 20 kilometers from Munich. We stopped in the morning about 5 kilometers from Munich. I remember it was a sunny day. A little in the morning, we looked and we saw wave after wave of American bombers fly over Munich and drop their bomb loads. We knew that during the day it was the Americans who were bombing. In the evenings it was the english who did the bombing. The American bombers were accompanied by jet fighters to defend the bombers. But at that time it didn't happen, and the bombers bombed at will. We were about 70 people in a wagon with 2 German guards together. At times we opened the doors when a group hat to relieve themselves. All of a sudden we heard air raid sirens and the American bombers came and dropped their bombs on the city. Suddenly 2 American jets came down over our train and started to attack our train. Some bullets ripped through the roof of our wagon. Fortunately it missed and nobody was hurt. The German guards immediately told us to hand out our striped coats to signal to the planes not to shoot at our train. To show we are concentration camp people and this probably helped. They didn't attack us anymore. later the train took us to about 7 kilometers from Allack-Dachau. From there they marched us to the camp Allack (April 15, 1945). We arrived to Allack and we got our first bread rations with a piece of margarine, a slice of bologne, 2 soups and sweet coffee everyday. But the hall we slept in was a terrible sight to see. There were no beds or pritches

at all. Everybody slept near each other on a cement floor with loose straw whenever one could find a place. People near you on the floor were dying everyday. Again here some gold coins I still had came to my rescue. I had enough to eat. One day a new transport of people came and among them were three friends of Sandomir. Their names were: Chil Cynamon who recently died in Israel, Harry Kanauk who now lives in Florida with his wife Janet, and Harold Singer now living in Far Rockaway with his wife Eva. When I first saw them it was naturally a big delight to see friends of my childhood back again. They asked me if I could bring them hot coffee. I knew somebody who worked in the kitchen, I immediately brought them my big pot of hot and sweet coffee. They appreciated it very much. We heard the news then that the Russian Army captured Berlin on May 2, 1945, and that the American Army is getting closer and closer to us. We were hoping that the end is nearing. But the Germans had plans to evacuate us again. When they assembled us again for moving us to the Tyrol Mountains, we all became very suspicious, what are they up too. The suspicion proved later to be correct. We were about 1500 people from many camps. We were marched for about 7 kilometers to a railroad where there was a long freight train waiting for us. Some of the wagons were open and some were closed. I remember it was raining then. I was walking together with my friends: Cynamon, Kamarek and Singer. To our bad luck, our group was assigned to an open wagon. People started to climb in fast into the wagon in order to find a good place near a wall where to sit down or lie down on the floor of the wagon. Soon the wagon was filled up and I was from the last to climb in but the wagon was filled up. there was only standing room left. I was very tired and exhausted the rain became stronger and I was completely soaked and could not even sit down. I started to feel chilly and just felt desperate. The door from the wagon were still open.

Suddenly some Jewish police and German guards appeared and asked if there are any sick or weak among us who would like to be transferred to another wagon at that moment I didn't know what to do. But my instinct then told me to go. My friends started to pull me back and kept telling me that this is a trick and that I should not go. They and we all had good reason to distract the Germans. Many times before when there were sick people they only took them to be shot, however, not even having where to sit down and feeling very chilly I thought whatever will be will be. I climbed down from my wagon and there were other people from other wagons. They walked us to the end of the train, in we went, and I immediately realized that this was the best thing that I did. I had a chance to grab a good place at the wall of the wagon. The wagon soon filled up and it was a very good feeling to stretch out and get some sleep in a closed wagon. Two German guards climbed in and the train started on its way to the Tyrol Mountains near the Austrian border. We traveled for a day and we came to a stop. The guards asked who ever has any needs to go down should do so. I soon saw my friends and showed them the wagon I was in. They told me they were shivering a whole night and they wished that they would also been a closed wagon. They told me they were going to shoot me then, and were all happy the way it turned out. Since we left Alice we didn't get any food rations. Whatever bread we took along with us, we had that eaten up already. They commanded us all to enter in our wagons. they told us the news that a transport of food packages has arrived from Switzerland from the Red Cross and that everybody will get one package including our guards. We looked out and we saw the Red Cross trucks arrive and parked at the road. We soon received for everyone a package including the guards which was a surprise to us. But insists and each one get a package too. These were American food products. We opened and found there chocolate, meat conserves like beef , ham, spam,

cookies, powdered milk, tuna fish, everything in cans all goodies we didn't see during the entire war and also in each package were 2 packs of cigarettes. I still remember one camel and one chesterfield. We immediately started to eat and to exchange food for cigarettes. I exchanged food for cigarettes for cookies and crackers. We felt that our suffering was coming to an end. We knew we were surrounded by the American Army. We heard already shooting from a distance. It didn't take long and we saw the first American tanks coming to us. They past us and kept on firing towards the roads on the other sides of the roads. More and more tanks and all kinds of vehicles passes us our train was right near the road. We all climbed out from our wagons. the American soldiers came among us and immediately took away all German guards. They took away their rifles and broke them by inserting them into the wheels of the wagons. They took away all German soldiers as prisoners of war they were loaded on trucks who arrived very soon. The scene was just . Some people started fires cooking the powdered milk and eating the meats conserves. Some immediately got loose stomachs from these foods which was not food for us to eat. Especially the meats and the powdered milk. there were several wagons which the Germans occupied and their big kitchen with. It was a sunny beautiful day. We found some knapsacks which the Germans left behind. We filled them up with food and decided to walk backwards as further we can. We wanted to make sure to distance ourselves from the front. We were afraid if the Americans should decide to make a tactical pullback, because the war was not finished yet and we could still her sporadic shooting from a distance. We walked back about 10 kilometers on the side of the road. From passing vehicles soldiers greeted us by throwing to us chocolates, cookies and cigarettes. World War II ended several days later, May 8, 1945. We arrived to the first city and we had no idea where to go? We decided we'll go into a German house and say from where we come and that until the American will find for us a place where to stay we want to stay in their house. they hesitated first by saying they have a small apartment and there is just not enough room to accommodate four people. But we insisted we have no other place where to go, and that well sleep in the kitchen floor. They finally agreed to let us stay until well find another place. While we were talking another 2 people came over and they too were looking for a place where to stay. We were wearing the stripped clothes so we were known to be from a concentration camp, but they were wearing civilian clothes and were talking the Russian language among themselves. So we knew they must be Russian prisoners of War. One of us, Chil Cynamon spoke up that we are here already sleeping in kitchen floor, then one of the Russians slapped him hard in the face and pointed a gun to the Germans and said to us you're yourself from a camp and you're defending the Germans? And they finally left. The German family were then glad to have us stay with them. They felt then that they're somewhat protected with us around. We gave them all the food we brought along with us. the house woman started to cook for us the right food we were supposed to eat. It turned out to be just the right place we needed. We gave them all of own clothes to be boiled and washed over. They gave us their clothes to be used temporarily. They bought in mattresses to sleep in the kitchen floor which was quite spacious. We took showers we ate and went to sleep. For the first time in years we felt again like humanbeings. It was like god sent. In the four weeks we stayed there we recuperated very nicely. During the day we organized went out and brought back lots of food even live chickens. It was a wild time then. Stores were broken open. We took new shoes, suits, underwear, whatever we needed. This was going on for four weeks. Then the American authorities decided no more looting allowed. Called us all through loudspeakers and announcements that we should

assemble at certain points in the city to be transported to special camps they set up for us by the UNRA. A United Nations Relief Organization. They took us with busses to the Freeman Camp near Munich. It was occupied before by the German Army. Every body got a bed a mattress a pillow and blankets a towel e.t.c. Food was pretty good sufficient but not plentiful. We had to go to Munich and register as stateless to get food stamps. Together with that food was plentiful. Soon we heard the news that the "S.S." commander from our transport from Allach to the place where we were liberated was recognized by the U.S. authorities as a hero. He showed in a prison of war camp that he had orders from "S.S." General Himmler to liquidate the entire transport by taking the people group by group to the woods and shoot them there but he disobeyed this order. Perhaps it was because it was obvious to every body Germany has lost the war already. But he was still cited as a hero for not obeying Himmler's order to kill us. He later came to some camps of the UNRA and he was given lots of gifts. The Freeman camp was a mixed camp of different nationalities like from Russian war prisoner, Polish forced laborers, Rumanians, Hungarians etc.. We found out that they were establishing special Jewish camps. The non Jewish prisoners kept on returning to their home countries, but the Jews had no place where to go. So, this was another reason they organized Jewish camps. Soon messengers from Palestine came to the camps and urged the Jews to go with the Illegal Aliyah to Palestine. The new camps were called D.P. Camps (Displaced persons.) We were willing to go with the illegal Aliyah to Palestine. but soon family affairs interfered with it. We soon moved to Feldafing, south from Munich-Bavaria. It was not far from the place we were liberated. This was a well organized Jewish Camp. There was a Jewish theatre a music house and various Zionist organizations. I remember one day Ben Gurion came and made a speech urging the Jews to join the illegal Aliyah to Palestine. I was later in 1947 that the state of Israel was created by the U.N. I knew that I have relatives in America. My mother's sister's family and also in Australia my father's sister Bronka and a brother Hershel and family. But I didn't know their address too. So, I was thinking then to go with the illegal Aliyah to Palestine. After a while my friend Harold Singer moved to a village of Obermerzing near Munich I and my friend Harry Kamarck decided to move there too. Our friend Cynamon however decided to stay in Feldafing and wait there for an opportunity to go to Palestine I and Harry Kamarck moved to Obermerzing. We all lived there together with a German farm. People then started to travel to Poland to find out whether any survivors were still alive in Poland. Some Jews came back to Poland from Russia where they were they survived during the war. I then got an urge to go to Poland. Perhaps I'll find somebody from my family? And also find out for certain what happened to my father and to my brother Schlomo after his arrest. At that time there were no passenger trains going to Poland. Polish former prisoners were transported to Poland by freight train. I decided to make the trip to Poland and joined such a transport train. It was a hectic trip to travel with the freight train. When we came to Pilsen Czechoslovakia some of us decided to switch to a passenger train to Praha. I too switched to the passenger train to Prague a certainly it was a very good switch in every respect. When we arrived into Praha we met a group who has just arrived from Poland among them was Barry Kamarck, Harry Kamarck's brother. He advised me not to go back to Poland. He told me about the growing situation for Jews there. That Polish partisans are killing Jews who are returning to their home places. to them Jews come back there is for one reason only to claim their properties which used to belong to them. Praha was the capital of Czechoslovakia, it was a beautiful and historic city. We stayed there for 4 weeks. Praha was liberated by the Russian Army and they were all over the

city. We stayed there in the Hotel "Charits" mostly where all the Jews stayed where they served us all food. I and Barry decided to go back to the American occupation zone to Obermenzing near Munich. After our lands people from Sandomir found out the address from the addresses from our relatives in America I wrote a letter to my cousin Geroge Ray who lived in Brooklyn and wrote him that I am thinking of going to Palestine with the illegal Aliyah. That involved to smuggle ourselves over the border to Italy, than with illegal transport boats to Palestine. The english allowed small quotas of Jews. I soon received a replay from my cousin George. He wrote me about his parents who passed away not a longtime ago. That they were 4 brothers and a sister. They all except him live in Chicago with their families. His advise to me was that he'll send me an affidavit with a boat ticket and should get to know the family first and later when there will be a Jewish state, I'll always be able to go there from Amercia. the letter made sense to me. And I decided to come to America. I was then less than 23, so I didn't take much time to make up my mind. In the meantime I was still looking if I could find out the addresses of my relatives in Australia but was unsuccessful. In January of 1947 my friend Harry Kamarck got our vises and in February we left together by boat "Marine Marlin" to the U.S.A. We arrived into N.Y. on March 3rd, 1947. My cousins wife Rose Ray and another cousin Jullus Cohen were waiting at the ship to welcome me. I was then taken to my cousin Julius Cohen to his house. He lived with his wife Ann and I knew they were children. I could feel they had an idea perhaps they would adopt me. They were very fine people, very well to do, but very religion. I was treated very well by them. They brought me a whole outfit, a suit, coat and some other sport jackets. But I realized again that they were to religious for me and that they had to know everything about me I told my cousins that I want to go to work, and learn the tool and die trade. My cousin soon got me a job to travel to the Bronx about one hour to go by subway I then found a furnished room with a family in the Bronx I was a 10 minute walk to work. I could speak already a little english which I started to study in Germany. I started to work with 50 cents an hour for the first 2 weeks, then I got a raise to 75 cents an hour which was then the minimum wage. After one year I made already 1 dollar an hour but I knew they took advantage over me and that I was worth more. It was a small shop only one year in business I knew already how to work on machines where I learned in a trade school in Germany. They told me I would get every year a 25 cent raise but I wasn't satisfied with my salary. To compensate for my low salary, they let me work much overtime that was already much better. Soon some relatives advised me to learn and became a cutter by ladies garments where the pay will be much better I started to work as a cutters helper where everything went well until after 4 months when I received a letter from the Draft Board Dept. to come and be examined for service in the U.S. Army. I must say I wasn't happy with this letter. It was November 1947 and I was then 27 years. Here I was learning a new trade and in the middle of it go serving in the Army. But an order in an order and I reported to the examination. I tried to complain that I have flat feet but they didn't recognize that. I was then drafted to the army basic training camp Kilmer N.J. and then to Camp Hood with an artillery unit of the 2nd armored division in Texas. It turned out to be for me a very good experience. I had a chance to learn better the language and also to have a good time. From there we traveled, when it was a long week end to Mexico and other cities Dallas, Fort Worth, Monterey. The training and maneuvers were tough and not easy, but I had a good position as a armorer. I was in charge of issuing the pistols and was also responsible that nothing should be missing from the arms room. Once I was hospitalized with tonsillitis, my tonsils had to come out. while I was taken to camp Brods near San Antonio 4

pistols m-45s were missing and there was a big scandal then. A special C.I.A. commission came from Washington and I don't remember what the final ruling was on that. An armorer was responsible to whom it was issued and who signed back in. You had to keep an accurate account. Your responsibility was also the weapons had to be cleaned and inspected. Every time they brought them back from use. If they were not cleaned properly you had a right to return it to him to clean it properly. The only ones who were exempted and that means that I had to clean for them were the colonel the 2 majors and my captain and also some officers who were in a extreme hurry and who asked you a favor. An order came later out from the Secretary of Defense Johnson to reduce the draft service to one year instead for the 21 months service we were drafted. By army law my rank until I finished was only private first class. After one year if I qualify I became a corporal. When my captain saw that I am getting ready to leave, he called me in his office and tried to talk to me to sign up for a career I will be promoted right of way to corporal and with a chance to be raised higher and higher with more money every time. If I'll be interested later I'll be sent to the officers school. After serving 20 years in the army I would retire with a life time pension. He kept me in his office for sometime. I told him I have decided to be discharged and go home and later I may reassign with the ordnance Dept. in Maryland. On my way to N.Y. I stopped over in Chicago where I had relatives. My cousins in Chicago advised me to stay and settle there. They got me a job in a woodworking shop where they made displays for exhibition which were taken place in Chicago. I worked there for about a year where I learned woodworking with machines. Then the war broke out in Korea and I received a letter from the Defense Dept. that I am being recalled for active duty with the 2nd armored Div. in Fort Worth, Texas. The same division I served with in Texas. I then read in the newspaper that the 2nd Armored Div. has been assigned to go to Korea. I was then very much upset, I lived through the Hitler war and now to go to the war again? I became desperate.

At that time they took only unmarried soldiers. A friend introduced me to a woman who was a widow, 2 years older than me and had a 5 year old boy. I must say, I liked her I went out with her for several times. I told her my situation about the letter I received from the army and that in order to be exempted I must get married right of way. I knew she like me. I then proposed to her. She told me, she liked me too, but cannot get married in a hurry. I told her that I understood. Next I called my cousin Charles Cooper to N.Y. and told him about my situation. I knew him to be a smart man. He told me his advise is I should immediately come back to N.Y. Perhaps he'll be able to help me. I thought this is a good idea. Next day I packed my things to go back by train to N.Y. I lived in Chicago with a family and a furnished room. there was another man in the same apartment who also had a furnished room. I left my letter with Ralph and asked him a favor, that if another lethal should come for me to mail it back to the same address with a note, that I moved out several months ago. The idea worked, I moved back to N.Y. and saw my cousin Charles Cooper. He gave me an idea to go to work in a chicken farm to Vineland, N.J. Because farmers were not drafted to the army. He took me there with his car to Vineland, N.J. because farmers were not drafted to the army. He took me there to take a look at the kind of work I would do but I didn't like it. I then returned to my old job where I started to work as a tool and die maker with "Stebbins Tool & Die, Co." During the 2nd World War diemakers were exempt I thought. I am better of to stay in this line and so I stayed in this line for the next 42 years. In the next year after I came back from Chicago to N.Y. a law came out that all who had served in the armed forces should register and serve in the reserves. I registered and was called a number of times to come and attend some lecturer about

combat. They showed us some actual fighting that was going on in Korea for several years. When I reached a certain age I was discharged fro the reserves. I never heard from the letter in Chicago anymore. In 1960 I met my lovely and beautiful wife Rose. And in May 29, 1961 we were happily married- Later our two lovely sons Leonard Barry and Mark David Cooper were born. The rest of our history is to be seen in movies and photos I made.

Nathan Cooper

June 1995

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