United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Julian Noga
December 14, 2000
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Julian Noga, conducted by Regine Beyer on December 14, 2000 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Kent, New York and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

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Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection, this is an interview with Julian Noga, conducted by Regine Beyer on December 14th, 2000 in Mr. Noga's home in Kent, New York. This is a follow up interview to a USHMM videotaped interview conducted with Julian Noga on December 11th, 1990. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. I would like to ask you two questions, first of them is actually give us your full name, and when and where you were born.

Answer: My name is Julian Noga. I was born July 31st, 1921 in Poland.

Q: And because there were several questions that I have after watching the videotaped interview, I thought several things were not discussed in detail enough, I would like to go back, actually, to the beginning, even before you born and just ask a few follow up questions. The first would be, until -- before you were born, actually, until 1921, your family was in -- in this country, in the U.S.. Where did they live and what did your father do?

A: Yes, my parents come to this country i -- before first World War. And they were married o -- here in this country, North Adams, Massachusetts. And they had three sons, and in 1921, after the first World War, my mother decided to go Poland. I don't know

whether she go for a visit, or she go for steady -- to stay in Poland. And at that time, 1921, she was pregnant with me. Soon she arrived to Poland, two months after that, I was born in Poland. So otherwise, my three brothers was born here, and my father stay in this country, just my mother and my three brothers, and she was pregnant with me, she come t -- t -- to Poland.

Q: But you never quite knew why that happened, why was your father still here? Was the idea to go back eventually, or --

A: I think that was little bit differences in their marriage.

Q: Okay, let's le -- we can le -- we can leave it at that. Now, when you were back, or when your mother was back in Poland, did you have a little bit of land there? Where did you go to and how did she make a living, how did she care for the family?

A: Yes, my mother had a few acres land, and I was grow up there on the country, by Tarnów, wa -- quite a ways from Tarnów, their name is Byshutshin, and the village was [indecipherable] what is hard to pronounce, right, for you? Okay, and I go school there, and soon I finished the school, I myself go to the big city, Tarnów, and --

Q: Let's go back -- let's go back just a little bit to -- to the first village. How lo -- how many years of schooling did you -- did you get? For how many years did you go to school?

A: Well, that was seven years.

Q: And what does the -- can you describe a little bit more about the situation in the village? Was there, for instance, some kind of Jewish community? Did you have contact with Jewish neighbors?

A: Oh yes, we go out with the Jewish people, we had some people, Jewish people in our village, and also there was a -- a little city by the name Struchin, and that was, I should say, 50 percent Jewish population, in that city, and we was very close with the Jewish people.

Q: Now, when you went to Tarnów, that was a larger city, right?

A: Oh yes, yes.

Q: And you became a dishwasher in a --

A: I started as a di-dishwasher. See, you gotta start somehow, somewhere. And I started, but I didn't stay too long ba -- in a elegant, Jewish restaurant, there was a club, 300 members they had, and had all rich Jewish people belong as members there. But I didn't stay too long there, and my idea was to learn something, and I go to the bakery and I become a bakery apprentice.

Q: And you stayed there for about two years and then the German invaded Poland?

A: Yes.

Q: And the bakery was closed, and you had to go back to the village and to your mother, right?

A: Exactly.

Q: You said in the -- in the videotaped interview that the Germans started pretty much right away arresting and executing Jews.

A: Yes.

Q: You mention an incident there where Jewish people that you know were also rounded up and -- and -- and shot. Did you witness that yourself?

A: No, I didn't witness, but I was there close, I was -- matter of fact, I was in that Struchin, that was Struchin. On a videotape they put a drawing, you know, [indecipherable] no, this is -- that was in Struchin, was just a two, three kilometer away, you know, little city. And that was a -- quite a -- quite a Jewish population, and those Jewish, we used to do business, we used to buy from those Jewish people, they have businesses, and we know those Jewish -- those Jewish people, see? Like for instance, one cabinet maker, and o-other -- the other one was -- sa -- had a tobacco business. And another one was photog -- photographer. I remember his name, he was-- name was Plushnik. And that was a day when the Germans come to that town. There was a special outfit, German outfit, SS, and they rounded up those Jewish people, just pull them out, you know, they would -- whoever they can catch them. And I believe that was 20 sener -- seven, 27 Jewish people. They -- they bring them to the park there, not far away from that church, they give them the shovels, picks -- picks and shovels, they dig out the graves for themself, and they shot them. And that was awful scare and the Germans told u -- told us -- told the Polish people, you gonna be the next. And that was very scary.

Q: But this particular incident you did not see it, just of -- you heard about it, right?

A: I di -- I didn't see it on own -- in my own eyes.

Q: Did you see anything that was directed against the Polish population?

A: Oh -- oh yes, oh yes, there was quite a few Polish people arrested, same time. First they go a-after intelligentsia, like teachers, you know. And they was arrested, many fact from Tarnów. That was their first transport to Auschwitz, to the concentration camp, first transport. That was strictly Polish people, professors, teachers, you know, all kind of intelligentsia, you know. That was -- I believe that was 170 some the intelligentsia.

Q: I just have to get the microphone a little bit further away, so --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- yeah, that should do. Do you know when that was, roughly, with the first transport with Polish people?

A: I believe this is right after they build out that concentration camp, yeah, yeah. So the Jewish people who come to the concentration camp Auschwitz come later, but the first prisoner was the Polish teachers and professionals, you know, and priests.

Q: Did you -- did you and your mother talk about the situation, what to do, or did you just kind of wait?

A: We just wait, and gosh, you know, we were scared and you didn't know what's going to happen to you, see? Because we didn't know -- we didn't know what the Germans going to do to us, see? That was pretty rough, though.

Q: And when the Polish army receded, drew ba -- withdrew while the Germans came in, there was -- weaponry was left?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And you happened to -- to find a gun and you decided to keep it, although at that time the German orders were pretty clear about what would happen. I mean, Polish citizens were supposed to deliver all the weapons to the Germans, or there was a death sentence if they didn't.

A: Exactly.

Q: My -- my question would be, why did you decide to keep it?

A: Oh my gosh, I was going through the woods, and I see something on the side, you know, a -- a fresh leafs, you know, and this some -- you know something is there. So I go there and I -- I -- I move the leafs you know, and I see beautiful, brand new rifle. So, I take it. I took it and I bring it home, and I put him in a -- in a barn. I hide him in a -- in a hay. But, same time, somebody saw me. And you know, people are people. People talk. And somebody make a denunciation on me to the chief of police, and he was a -- he was a German. Eventually, you know, they called me, and they told me to bring the rifle.

Q: So you kept it, di -- why -- but actually why did you keep it? Because, I mean, you were young, you were a young --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- boy, a young man at that point.

A: Foolish.

Q: Did you -- but did you think it would be useful for you to [indecipherable]

A: I didn't think really about that, but just to ha-have an beautiful rifle, you know. Maybe go hunting.

Q: Was -- was that sort of -- how did you feel about a Polish -- a fellow Polish person going to the Germans, though, and denouncing you? I mean, was that something --

A: I don't know how this happened, that I can answer these questions, see, because you know, you never know, you never know. But I know that was how they find out, see? Somebody must say something.

Q: So and then you were brought to the Gestapo in Linz, and you were interrogated?

A: No, first --

Q: Oh, no, no, no, I'm sorry, you were what -- but you were brought to the -- the --

A: -- fir --

Q: -- the Gestapo

A: -- first their chief, his name was Vanline. Many people know that name from my area where I come from, you know. He was -- he was a tough guy. He speak fluently Polish. Matter of fact, before the war, he was a engineer there, from the bridge there -- they was build up the bridge. He was a engineer, but at the same time he was a spy, he was working for Germans. And then, after the Germans come, he become the commandant of that police station there. So he questioned me. Did you bring your rifle? Which -- and I says, no, I haven't got no rifle. Yes, you have. You know, and this, and this, and this and then they beat me pretty bad, you know. Yeah. Himself, you know, gave me 25 on my rear end, and there was two other guys, you know, they beat me too. Then I was lucky

because the people from the village come to him and they say I am innocent. I was working in a bakery and I had a good record, you know, I was clean. And he changed the mind, and he says, yeah, on one condition. We let you go, but Wednesday we gonna recruit in some young people for Germany to work. Now, why don't you be there, and you go Germany, and you be -- going to be more safe in Germany than here. He told me so. So me and friend of mine and few others, we go Wednesday there, we registered there, and they put us on a train and we go, who knows where we go, what's going to happen. That was very hard for me, that early in the morning, to say good-bye to my mother.

Q: But then you did not go to Germany after all, you were brought to Austria --

A: Yes.

Q: -- at this time to Linz. Did you ever find out why that happened?

A: Well, at that time they needed young people on the farms, in the -- in the factories, and happen our transport, that was -- they pick up some more in Tarnów, in Kraków, they pick up more, more people, young people. And happened that -- that this transport go to Austria [indecipherable] Czechoslovakia, and -- at that time, and Vienna, and from Vienna, Linz [indecipherable] yeah, and from Linz we go to the farms, say -- me, and friend of mine.

Q: And so, at the unemployment office then, there were farmers waiting for the help to come, and one of them waiting was your wife-to-be, your future wife, Frieda, and you went to her parent's farm.

A: This is a -- a really coincident, and a good coincident, I should say. Good and bad and good. Yes. So we was pick up by the young, blonde lady. She was that time what, 18 - 19 years old. Because, actually, her father's supposed to come. Her father was a big farmer there. But he catch cold, for some reason he couldn't go, so he sent Frieda. Frieda was his favorite daughter, you know, he love her. And Frieda pick us up, me and friend of mine by the name Frank.

Q: And then at that farm you had to work very hard, but apparently you had meals at the table with the family, the food was plentiful, the food was good. How did you feel though, towards the situation? I mean, it was forced labor after all. Did you feel resentment towards -- towards the -- the parents in any way?

A: Oh, oh, I -- I can't complain, because number one, they treat us very, very good. They -- Greinegger, that's the name of the -- of that -- her father, Greinegger family, they treat us good. They feed us -- we eat by the same table with the whole family. Would you believe we had five meals every day? And we had meat every day. And when you figure th-that was a war time, people in the city was living on a -- on a -- what you call? On a cards, you know? Just so much. We had plenty food. But also we work, on a farm you know, that was a hard work, but we don't mind.

Q: And then you grew -- because you also worked with Frieda on the -- on the -- on the fields, and whatever had to be done there, you grew a little closer. You got to know each other just a little bit, I mean, under very difficult conditions. And then one day you said that you asked her whether you could listen to the radio --

A: Yes.

Q: -- on -- actually, it's not in your story, but I think it is in -- it -- it's definitely in your wife's story, that you asked her whether you could listen to the radio because you didn't know much was happening in the world, and that was also very forbidden, wasn't it?

A: Her father had a special room that he had a little office over there, and on the wall you can see all those rifles, you know, and that is because he was a -- he had this hunting area there. For a hundred years there was the hunting license in that house. And there was a radio in that time, yeah. And when everybody goes sleep, you know, Frieda opened the door, you know, and let me listen to the radio. So 10 o'clock in the evening there was a very interesting news in Poland -- in Polish from England. And that was very interesting. And somebody hear this, somebody find out that -- I don't know how the Gestapo find out about that [indecipherable]. That was one reason.

Q: Somebody must have seen you, right?

A: Could be, yeah.

Q: But that did not -- but -- but -- but you still could stay on the farm, or -- you -- you were not immediately brought to -- to the Gestapo?

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: But then after awhile you got a little too close with Frieda for father's taste, because it was a dangerous situation, so he gave you an ultimatum basically. He brought you into the room and he said that one of you would have to go.

A: Oh that -- that happened after -- now tha -- we gotta go back little bit, see, like [indecipherable]. So, we was working altogether. There was four daughters, you know, he -- Mr. Greinegger had four daughters and one son. And one of the daughter, by the name Frieda, that's the same Frieda pick us up in the -- you know, when we come from the transport. And happen that winter we was working in the woods, because they had -- they had, I don't know, about 20 acres woods, so we got the woods for the -- for the use -- for the house use, and they had for sale, okay. And it happened we work in the -- we work in the woods, then we work on the farm. And it happened we -- we come -- me and Frieda, we come closer and closer. We was very friendly to each other, see? She was a beautiful, beautiful blonde. And they say I was good looking too, I don't know, I'm not sure about that.

Q: You still are, I think.

A: Thank you. So, it gets closer and closer til agains -- that was too much. So the father that time called Frieda and he had a speech with her. And he says, "You come too close with Julian, and you know this is against the law. You know what's going to happen to you. You know what's going to happen to him. And who knows what a g -- what's going to happen to us. This is against the law to have anything to do with a foreigner." And he was right. Yeah. So he was pretty tough, first time as she can remember, and she slap her over the -- on her face, you know, slapped her, yeah. And she was crying. Then after that he called me. And he had a speech to me, yeah. And he told me absolutely this is against the law. You -- you can -- you can't have anything to do with my daughter anyway. So

one of you gotta go. Which one? And for some reason Frieda want to go. And she want to -- she want me to stay on the -- on the farm. He says, that's up to you. You want to go, okay, and Julian stay on this farm. And that's what happened.

Q: Wh-When -- when we talk about being close, what -- what did that really mean? I mean, you did not speak Austrian -- German -- Austrian in -- very much, she didn't speak Polish. What did you talk about? I mean, closeness, what did -- what did that really mean?

A: Oh, you'd be surprised when you -- when you like somebody how fast you learn -- how fast you learn that language. And I -- I knew some words from -- from the school, you know, and didn't take me long. Matter of fact, in a -- in a -- in a year I pick up about oh, I should say 70 percent German language. What is -- Austrian language is German language, just a different -- different dialect, you see. So we a -- we like each other, let's put it this way.

Q: Was it surprising to you though, that Frieda decided to leave?

A: Frieda, yeah. She decided, yeah. And she went. And that was -- that was unusual see, because there was a such a big farm, so many acres land and everything, you know, was plenty work, you know, but one of us gotta go. They want to split us. Doesn't matter who goes, who stays. So happened she goes to another farm, quite a ways from that place. But we make a promise, you know, the first Sunday we're going to meet by the church there in that town where she was working.

Q: Let -- let me -- let me just ask you a little -- little tiny thing here.

A: Yeah?

Q: I think in your story I realized that you seemed to indicate a little bit that Frieda asked you, and in Frieda's story, in your wife's story, I always had a little feeling that -- that you asked her. So, who -- who asked -- wh-who made that -- who made the decision to -- you kind of agreed that you would see each other, or who --

A: Well, this happened -- we -- really, that's a tough question, you know. We don't know how this happened, see? You can't tell with the friendshi -- where -- where the friendship begin, where that ends and where the love starts, you know? It's hard to -- to say it, see? But we like -- we like each other so much, so we don't want to be split. We want to meet each other and we want to continue. And that's probably what we're falling in love, that time.

Q: So you stayed on -- on her f -- on the large -- on the big farm with Frieda's parents and she went to another, smaller farm -- I don't quite remember, about 15 kilometers, or sort of not too far away.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you decided to see each other. But then somebody found out about it and denounced you, right?

A: Right.

Q: Do you know who -- what kind of person that was?

A: We had pretty close i-idea, but we -- we can't be assure for 100 percent, but anyway, anyway, again, you got some people, they say everything, you know, and they make a

denunciation. So one s -- that was Saturday evening, I drive -- I go see Frieda and I -- I thi -- finding in that place where we should meet. Then after that I find out she was arrested, after. So they come in and ar-arrest me -- Gestapo -- police, you know, and the police delivered me to the Gestapo in Linz.

Q: Before you go one from there, let me just ask you one more question. How long, roughly, did you stay at her parent's farm? How -- how long -- wh-what kind of time are we talking about?

A: Til November. November 1940, I think. We was arrested first time, right?

Q: So that was about what, like a half a year or a year?

A: No, that was almost a year.

Q: Almost a year, now?

A: Yeah.

Q: And then you were interrogated again, but --

A: 11 days.

Q: 11 days.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: But they decided to -- to let you go, and to send you to a different -- to different --

A: They interrogate me and Frieda, and Frieda says no, there was nothing between us, just friendship, and same thing I -- I -- I was saying. See, because we agree, you know, in case we got caught, you know, we should say there was nothing. Actually was nothing,

see, besides you know, we lo -- we love each other, you know, and -- and -- a-and this. And so they, after 11 days they let me go. That was on Friday, November 1940.

Q: But [indecipherable] I'm sorry.

A: Yes.

Q: That was a --

A: And they didn't lay a hand on me, they -- they -- they were tough, you know, they ask tough question you know, and they look at me straight in eyes, you know, and then the chief says, well, I think he tell us the truth. Okay, we let him go. But, before you go, here is the paper and you read this. That was in German on one side, and that was in Polish, for anything to do, the bottom line, anything to do with German or Austrian women for the Auslander -- for the foreigner, death sentence, to hanging. And he says, okay, sign your name. So I did sign my name. And they gave -- and then they let me go back to Frieda's father to pick up my belongings, and they already sent -- they had a address, and they send me to another farmer. Little smaller, but also nice people. Different direction. So on Monday, okay, on Monday in the morning they call Frieda and they tell her, okay, you free, but you sign some paper. And the same paper, she signed what I signed Friday, okay? Tha -- but they say -- I don't know what this says on -- on -- on that. Well, she read the same thing, you know, death sentence, you know, for anything to have -- to do with a German woman. So you wouldn't believe, you know, by coincident I go Friday there to Frieda's father, the farm, pick up my belonging and stay over Saturday and Sunday, and Monday morning I take the train and come back to Linz. And that Monday morning

Frieda was going free. And you wouldn't believe, I was waiting for my train going in a direction and I walk, I don't know what I was thinking, and come head on to Frieda. I thought this is impossible, but I was very happy to see. So we go on the side quick, we exchanged the addresses. She go for another farm. They didn't send her home, no, another farm. A small -- really small farm, they needed her, and she go there. And again we make a agreement that we -- that first Sunday [indecipherable] first Sunday, we gonna meet there somewhere halfway between li -- Velz and Gunskiha -- oh, Velz and Linz on the Auterstrassen.

Q: I think this is a good time to change the cassette here. This is the end of tape one, side A interview with Julian Noga. This is a --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Julian Noga. This is tape number one, side B. So, you both worked on different farms now, but you still decided to see each other.

A: Right.

Q: But once again you got, eventually, denounced by the farmer. Frieda's farmer at first knew about it but decided not to say anything, but when she decided to give up the job on that farm to take another job, he decided to -- to announce you to the -- to the SS, to the Gestapo.

A: Exactly, that's what happened.

Q: Yeah. And so this time what -- then what happened? You were -- both of -- both of you were arrested, and you had to stay in -- in jail for quite a long time this time, wasn't it?

A: Yes. First Frieda was arrested, and when I went there and she didn't show up wher -- where she's supposed to show up, you know, where we meet. Then I had a bad conscience or how shou -- bad feeling something might happen, because we were supposed to meet. Then on September 19, on that farm where I was working, their name was Prosmueller, that was on either side of Linz between Linz and Vienna, just a -- oh, about four or five kilometer from the very well known concentration camp Mauthausen. And that day, on that day, that was again Friday. Friday is a bad day for me. Was, at least. And we was -- before noon we was digging potatoes there on that farm, and I was working with that -- with the horses, yeah, and we come for lunch, and as we was eating lunch, from the -- the other side of the kitchen, somebody walk in, see? Then we hear the conversation. And what I hear, oh he's very good, he's very hard working, yeah, he is nice man, oh, yes, yes. That's what they say. And that was a policeman. So after he questioned -- because the -- the -- the farmer, and the -- and the parents, they was eating in the kitchen, we was eating in the dining room, see? Then, after awhile, we just almost finished lunch, and that policeman come to the dining room and says, Julius Noga, I have to bring you to the Gestapo, to the Linz. He says, I have to bring you to the Linz. I says, Gestapo? He says yes. When I hear that word Gestapo, I know -- I already knew it is Gestapo. I says, oh God. Good-bye. He says, okay, you change your clothes, take

whatever you need like toothbrush and soap, when you had, whatever, you know, take it with you, and you come with me. So we go on a station, regular station and we take the train. That was only 16 kilometer to Linz. So what was very hard for me to say good-bye to this wonderful family, you know? They took me as their own. They had two children, a little girl, Minnie, she was about eight years old, and Francel, he was about 10 - 11 years old. And the children was there, and he ask me, "Julian, where you going?" I says, "Well I have to go on Linz." "What for?" I says, "I don't know." "Are you be back?" I says, "I don't know." "Oh, come on, Julian," you know? Break my heart, cause those children were so nice. And the farmer come and says, "Julian, you have to go. Gosh, what did you do?" I says, "N-Not much." "Well, I gonna help you all I can, okay?" So the policeman was good to me, I says well, okay, ha -- I gotta finish with my horses, see, I take care of the horses, I gotta give them water, I gotta give them some hay, you know? He says, go ahead, do it, yeah, okay, we got time. So I say good-bye to my horses. Such a big, beautiful, shiny horses, oh my gosh. That was a break -- a heartbreak. And there was a French war prisoner Louie, and I want to talk to Louie because I know he gonna take care of the horses, so I told Louie, Louie -- he understand pretty good German, I says, take care of those horses, they are very nice horses, you know? Don't beat them, never beat them, you know. Treat them good, work with them slow, don't rush them, you know. Take care of them. He says, I will, I will. So I say good-bye to horses and to everybody, so we go. Policeman had a -- a bicycle, so we walked to the station just a kilometer and a half, two kilom -- not even two kilometers. Then we were ou -- then he

come to the ma -- where they sell the tickets, and there was a man, and -- yeah. And for that man, each morning he had a -- yeah, each morning I bring some milk, see? He was the -- he was the regular old man, you know, high ranking, and -- and he said -- the police ask him question because that was forbidden for Polish people to ride the tran -- train. So he asked, did you sell any tickets to this man here? And I was behind that policeman, and he look at me, and I -- I just make a motion no. And he says, no, I never sell him no tickets. Oh, good. So he put a [indecipherable] the tickets, or how many times he sell me the tickets, but he was a very nice man. His name was Schattsinger. Okay, so the train come, and I was standing there, and I was thinking, my gosh, you know, should I fall on the track, you know, and let the train go over me, you know, because I know this time it's going to be tough, and I know what I gonna get it.

Q: You -- you -- you talked a -- you told that story in a -- on the videotape, so maybe we can just summarize a little bit by saying that you -- you spent what, 11 months, or quite a long time in jail. You tried to get out of jail, that was prevented. They found out about your attempt to break out, and eventually you were sent to -- to the concentration camp Flossenbürg.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: I would like to ask you a few questions about Flossenbürg, if that's all right?

A: Okay, fine.

Q: One of the interrogating SS men there, asked you during the early time, when you had just arrived, whether you knew why you were sent to the concentration camp.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you said, because of your relations to an Austrian girl.

A: Right.

Q: And he indicated that that was not so, but that you were there for revenge purposes too, to pay back, I believe you said, you p-payback for the German soldiers killed in Poland in Begost?

A: Bidgast.

Q: In Bidgast.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you ever find out whether that was the real reason, wh-whether that was really true? That seems to be a different --

A: I think that was his personal opinion, you know, probably he lost his friend or somebody there in Bidgast, that was -- that was big outbreak, before the war start over there. And probably he take advantage and tell me this in [indecipherable] you know, you here for those German soldier got killed in Bidgast. That -- I was surprised, you know, I -- I don't even knew that time where is Bidgast, as far away from our place where we was living.

Q: Tell us a little bit more about who was there in this concentration camp, where it was a stone quarry, where you had to work very hard cutting stones. What -- what was the population of that camp?

A: That time when I arrived, it was on a August, I believe August third in 1942. That was a small population I should say, not quite 2,000. And my number I -- I received my number, I don't know if that number is right or not, 1623, that is my number.

Q: And what were the nationalities? I mean, you were Polish, were there also Jewish prisoners, were there Austrian German prisoners, what was [indecipherable]

A: Oh yes, that was about 17 - 18 different nationalities in that concentration camp. And actually the oldest prisoners was Austrian and German. Actually, 1938, that Austrians prisoners, and German, they build up that concentration camp. There was no other -- other nationalities than the first. After they build up that concentration camp, I believe the first prisoners come from Czechoslovakia. Then, naturally come from Poland and o-other countries.

Q: Were people treated differently depending on where they came from?

A: Maybe that was just a little differences between like French prisoners, English -- we had some English prisoners, too. Matter of fact, two Americans pilot, they was killed there, in Flossenbürg. They run away from a stalag, from a regular war prisoners camp, and they was caught by Flossenbürg and they was brought to Flossenbürg, and after their questioning, they was executed, those two American pilots, and they're in a death valley in Flossenbürg, they got the ledge, and American flag, and you can read on that ledge -- it is a big ledge, you know, six feet long and about 36 inches wide, about eight inches high, you know? And that was founded by Polish people, that ledge, Polish prisoners. And says, two Americans, unknown. But I remember when they was brought to the

concentration camp, and I remember when they was questioned, yeah. And when you read those -- you got those ledges, about 17 or 18 in the death valley, you go from one to the other one, then you see how many people die, losted their life in that concentration camp in Flossenbürg. You start with the Russian, over 25, 000. The next one gonna be Polish ledge, same size as the American ledge, you know, over 17,000. Then you got the French, then you got the Czechoslovak ledges, you know, 3,000 - 4,000 French, Czechoslovak, Italians. And -- and before you go any further before that you got a German ledge, and says exactly I want to say 5,969. Something like that. Almost 6,000 German people losted their life -- German prisoners losted their life there. That was a tough, tough concentration camp. When you are in, there was not much differences, you know. We was treated almost -- almost the same.

Q: Were there Jewish prisoners, too?

A: Yes, that was about -- it says on the -- on the -- on a board somewhere, and on a chimney, cremation chimney, it says 3,335 Jewish people lost their life in Flossenbürg. Yes, they was there from Poland, from Hungary, from different -- German, Jewish too, from Germany.

Q: Were they treated differently at all?

A: They was treated bad. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And they was working, you know, they give them the -- the hardest work, you know. There was Russian, Jewish people, and Polish people was treating the worst.

Q: You did, in your videotaped interviews, speak about a German prisoner, Hans Bauer, who -- who had saved your life, twice I believe --

A: Yes.

Q: -- you speak very highly of him.

A: More than twice.

Q: More than twice. We don't have to say that over again, but was there -- w-were there other incidents where it wasn't quite so black and white as one sometimes seems to think, where other people helped you, who were maybe also German, or other nationalities?

A: Well, Hans Bauer was German, you know, but he -- if he -- if he died, God give him heaven. He saved me so many times, not only twice, so many times, because we come in friends in Munich when we stay over the night there, and I even [indecipherable] his cigarettes, and he was a heavy smoker. And he says, "Okay, thank you, I can keep this -- that bag?" I says, "Keep it, because I got another one." And he says, "Okay, you are a good fellow, I remember this." Okay, and later on he become kapo -- foreman, you know, and many times he -- he had me, you know, I -- and -- and I was so glad, you know? I counted the -- once I fall in a -- well, the -- the -- th-the main kapo -- kapo in -- in a granite quarry caught me during the work, you know, and I was smoking. You not supposed to smoke for 12 hours when you work there in the quarry, so -- so he gave me shtaffkommando, what is shtaffkommando?

Q: It's a punishment --

A: Outfit.

Q: -- outfit, yeah.

A: Yes, yes. Now, in that punishment outfit you can't last more than 30 days, you know, then you com -- either you commit suicide or they kill you, you know? And I, thanks God, you know, I was there seven or eight days, then one evening I saw Hans Bauer and I told him, I'm in a shtaffkommando. He says, "Why don't you told me sooner? Okay, tomorrow morning you -- you go with my outfit to the quarry." So next day I go, and a kapo from the other kommando, shtaffkommando, he come and says, "Hey, you not belong over here, come on. You belong to me." Hans Bauer come to him, "Nevermind, he stay with me." Oh. He was surprised you know, but you know, those kapos between themselves they don't want to fight, you know? So I was lucky that time, he saved my life ri -- right there.

Q: What -- what -- what about the guards and SS authorities there, was there different kinds of -- of treatment, too?

A: Of course. There was some, not all of them was bad. There was some people like we are too, you know. There was some -- was some bad ones, and also good ones. And we didn't fright too much SS. What we was frightened, the kapos because they want to show the SS how good they are, they no have to work, you know, they just you know, had a better food, you know, plenty food, you know, and of course you know, hey kapos, you gotta be careful with the kapos.

Q: Did you ever lose faith while you were there? I -- I believe you were brought up Catholic, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was it -- was a strong -- was it a religious family, could one say that, or was it not so strong?

A: Ah, y-yes. Hans Bauer helped me because I told Hans Bauer several times, tomorrow I go commit suicide, I go on the barbed wire, you know, and they gonna shoot me, you know, I -- just a couple minutes you know, and I gonna go. [indecipherable] he call me crazy, you crazy he says. No, that's the easiest way, you know. No, no, no, no, no, don't do that. So he -- he helped me. Now, that was a time, especial that was so hard, you know, before big holidays gonna come, you know, like Christmas, Easter, you know, one Christmas, second Christmas, third Christmas and you still there. And you ask yourself, my gosh, what I did? I didn't steal, I didn't kill, you know? Because I loved someone? That's what I'm here and I'm mixed up with those people over here? And sometime you -- when you see those execution almost every day, every other day they hang somebody, and they had big speeches, then you hear those shots every morning before six o'clock in death valley, then in the evening. Then you hear some shots at night, there by the crematorium, you know, the black wagon come with some kind of people, go straight to the crematorium, and you hear just a shotgun, you know? You hear -- you hear those shots, you know? So today people says, gosh, you know, some people disappeared, and many families, they don't know how they disappeared. That was to Flossenbürg what they disappeared. And sometime -- sometime you -- you start to believe -- you start -- stop to believe if the God is right. I says no. God can't see this, you know. And God --

how God let this happen? Then next time, you -- you cry, you pray, God forgive me. God, I love you. Please help me. Is so hard, you know, h-how you -- once you ready to die, you know, you no believe in nothing, you know the next time my gosh, maybe -- maybe po -- by some kind of coincident like Hans Bauer, many times he told me, maybe this gonna be some occasion, you know. Maybe we gonna be free someday. See? We ga -- but, on the other hand, have all kind of professors, you know, all smart people, politician and this and this, and on Sunday afternoon I like to hear what they say, you know? I learned lots from them. And they say the one thing what they did to us, they not gonna let us free. Before the Americans or Russian, whoever come first, before they come in, they gonna kill us all. So they gonna, how should I say [indecipherable] --

Q: Erase.

A: -- the evidence.

Q: Erase the evidence.

A: Erase the evidence, you know, no witnesses. And that was possible, and that -- that -- that happened in -- in some other concentration camp, that what I hear.

Q: Julian, how long did you stay? How much -- how long did you stay in Flossenbürg?

A: Well, that was when I -- A-August third, 1942, til the end, til April 23rd, I never forget that -- that date. Is a lucky number.

Q: And then the camp was evacuated and you were all taken on a death march to -- to Dachau.

A: Dachau.

Q: But before you reached Dachau actually, you were liberated by the American army, by Patton's third army, actually.

A: Right.

Q: What was your health and your mental state at that point?

A: Oh, you see, th-those -- since Friday, when -- when we marched til Monday at noon, we was freed. They not give us nothing to eat except I think on Sunday they gave us a -- just a little slice of bread. No coffee, no water, nothing. So we had no food, and we gotta march so many hours. Sometime they let us r-rest for three or four hours, in no time we march again. So, when you're hungry and thirsty, how -- how you can march? So among the -- the -- from my column, what was almost 2,000 prisoners, there was just half of that left. And I tell you the truth, I was prepared to die, because I was -- I was so weak, you know, and each step hurts, you know, and -- I -- I-I-I was -- I was dizzy, you know, and gosh, you know, but, since in the morning I hear the machine guns in behind, I hear the -- we hear that noise, you know, and we understand that the -- that the Americans come, you know? So you fight and you -- you -- you get your strength, the last strength you got, you know, to last as long as possible, you know. And we did it. Gosh, you know, 12 o'clock, at noon, the first tanks -- American tank I saw. First I was mixed up, you know, because I see the big white star on their tank, I thought they are Russians. But soon we find out they are Americans. And that was, I believe, 90th or 97th division of that army, General George Patton, God give him heaven, George Patton, General George Patton. He is my, how should I say, he saved my life.

Q: What -- what -- what happened then? Could you recuperate in some way? Could -- di -- did you get food? Did you get sent into where? What happened afterwards?

A: About 10 o'clock, before noon, we passed a little town by the name Shtamserit. It was in Bavaria [indecipherable]. And then when we was free, we go back to that little city. And right away, the American takes -- take care of us, you know? They open a kitchen, they feed us, they give us cigarettes. And the American, thanks to them, many of them sacrificed their life, but also many there save our lives. So I appreciate it very much. Thanks to all of them.

Q: Wh-When you were a little stronger, did you go back to Poland? Did you know anything about your mother at that point?

A: Ah --

Q: I should -- I should also say -- we should also say that before the outbreak of the war, your three brothers, who were also in Poland, went back, had been gone ba -- had gone back to --

A: United States.

Q: -- to United States --

A: Right.

Q: -- again, so it was -- your mother was back in Poland. Did you know anything about her?

A: Yes, wa -- I-I wrote her a letter once awhile, then I received some letters from my mother, and so -- also my mother send me some packages once in awhile. You know,

bread and onions and little bit pork, you know, whatever, yeah. Yeah, so I know my -- my mother was still alive, but after I recuperated, after three weeks, the American officer gave me a bicycle and then I pedal to Austria to see my lovely girl. I was -- now, I -- I was anxious to see her, you know, and how she lives, you know, and whether she gonna take me back. So -- so I eat that time, from the first day I eat. So I starts slowly, you know, you can't overeat it. But after awhile, you know, I eat day and night, wherever I can find the food, you know, I eat. So I was strong enough after three weeks, and I pedal to Austria. First I come to a friend of mine, another friend, Eddie. I didn't -- I didn't have enough guts, you know, go by myself to Frieda's father farm, you know? So I took with me Eddie, friend of mine. And then that was on Saturday, May 18, 1945, how can I forget? And was eight o'clock at night. We come to the front door, ring the bell, and Frieda's sister Teresa come out. And when she saw me she s-start screaming, Julius, Julius is here. Frieda was sitting on the back porch, you know, when she hear that name she couldn't believe it, you know, that's me. She was thinking, you know I -- I was dead, you know, because they -- they -- they -- they hear, you know, what they was doing in the concentration camp, by their evacuation, and she had pretty good idea from Ravensbrück, you know, how that treatment was, see? So she hoped, but she wasn't sure whether I'm still alive or not.

Q: So, the parents decided to let you stay on the farm, or what -- what -- what happens?

A: No, I -- I didn't want to stay on that farm, but I stayed just a little on the other side of the woods, you know, with my friend Eddie. And that was nice people you know, they let

me stay, they give me a room, you know? I stayed there and then we have Red Cross, and the American UNRRA we call that, you know, they -- they give us packages, you know, and food, you know, cigarettes and the Americans take of us good, you know?

Q: Maybe this is another good way to end this side here. This is the end of tape one, side B, interview with Julian Noga.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Julian Noga. This is tape number two, side A. So you had come back to -- to the farm or to the village where Frieda lived?

A: Right.

Q: And you found housing somewhere, some Austrian people that you stayed there, with your friend?

A: Yeah, I stay with my friend a-and just not far away from Frieda's parents.

Q: And you began to see Frieda again?

A: Every day.

Q: What was the reas -- reaction by -- from her parents? How did they feel about it, di --

A: Well, the -- they knew what we was going through and they -- they was -- they were not against us, you know, they understand, you know. They a -- actually, they understand we belong together.

Q: Did you experience any responses or reactions from the people in the -- in the village, in the area there against or for you? What -- what was the relationship? Did you have any contact with them? Were there any feelings towards you?

A: With -- the village there by Frieda's parents? Well, I didn't have so much contact with -- with those Austrians there. They were friendly, and I don't know what they was thinking about me, but Frieda was, you know, in a different position, see, wi -- number one, she was from a rich family. And the small village knows, you know, she was in a

concentration camp, why she was there, they know. So that time, you know, you come to the small village like that where the people know each other, you know, and this -- it's little bit sensitive, let's put it this way. So Frieda go through something, you know, different. To me it didn't make much difference.

Q: How did you -- how did you live at that time? You got assistance from Americans still, or did your par -- did her parents help you, or how did that work?

Q: Red Cross, and the organization -- American organization UNRRA, we call them that. And you had some places, charity places you know, and they take care of those people. Oh, right away they used to have those houses, and barracks you know, the Germans worker was living before. And they put those people in a -- again, in a camp, but different type camp, you know. They had a good kitchen, good food. So sometime we go there. I -- I didn't live -- I live only about two months in a camp like that, you know, for the refugees, camp for the refu -- refugees, but I didn't like that. So many people together, you know, that's reminds me, you know? That's the same thing what I was going through three years, or so -- so I go and live private and I look for the job. And I become -- I worked on a machineries for a -- for a -- for a company. I was the baggerfuehrer, how you say baggerfuehrer in English? [indecipherable] and -- yeah.

Q: It's some kind of working machine that you drove? Back --

A: Bigger, yeah, backhoe, backhoe, bigger, something like that yeah. I was working very good job, and I lived privately, and any time I had chance I visit Frieda, Frieda visit me, you know, and we prepared to --

Q: And then you deci --

A: -- get married. There was no other way, see? The -- the only thing is, gonna be a little bit hard, you know, because I have to face her father and ask him, and I did. Not by myself, there was a -- another husband from Frieda's sister, mar -- Margaret husband. And he says, "Julian, I go with you to father, you know, and ask, you don't be afraid." So we go, both of us, you know and I ask. And the first thing you know, he ask me, what you gonna do? How you plan your life? [indecipherable]. We got plenty land, we can give you piece of land, and we got lum-lumber, you know, build up the house if you want to stay here. And I says no, no, I got my family in United States. Oh, well I [indecipherable] to America, see, because I know there are -- America is a free country, you know, and it doesn't matter you know, whether you -- what kind of a nationality you are, you know, you -- you live different. See, but in a small village like that, you are a foreigner, you know? They might say, okay, he's a good man, you know, and this and this, you know, but you gonna be foreigner forever. Y-You see what I mean? That's why there was only one way for us to -- after we get married. Then he give his okay, yeah, okay, so long you go United States. Yeah, you got your family, I hope you take care of my daughter. I says don't worry about that, yes I will, I promise, you know. Then, okay, we prepared and then we get married exactly one year to the date when we're -- when I was freed in [indecipherable] in Germany, yeah.

Q: But before you left, your daughter was born?

A: Oh yes, yeah, yeah, little Frieda was born there in Austria before we come to United States, yeah. And --

Q: When was she born?

A: She was born July -- July 12, I think, 1946, right, yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Did you -- did you go back to Poland to see your mother?

A: No, at that time, I liked to go to Poland, but that time there was a Communist regime and I thought, you know, they might keep me there. So I didn't take a chance, but an -- after 1960, I decided, for good or for bad, I decided to go and see my mother. That was exactly 21 years when I saw her last time. And that was at Christmastime, shortly before Christmas, and that was the nicest Christmas for me and for my mother to see each other, and she was so happy to see me. And then I stay nine days in Poland. Then I go back to Austria, I stay there on a -- on a -- nine, 10 days there, then I come back and everything was all right, and I was glad I -- I saw my mother. And she was happy to see me, and she know that we got good living here in United States because she was here before. Matter of fact, she was three times here when she was single, you know. She traveled back and forth, you know, then third time when she come [indecipherable] she married my father.

Q: We will talk about that a little bit more when we have reached your life here in America in --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- in the 1960's. You had never seen, actually, your father, and you had not really seen your -- yeah, you had seen your brothers, but never your father.

A: No.

Q: Did you know where they were living at that time and how did it come about that you could go? You needed somebody to vouch for you, I think?

A: Yes, throughout the Red Cross I found out the addresses for my oldest brother Matthew, and for my father. And I wrote a letter to my father. He had to sign the affidavit of support, and he did sign the paper and that's what we come to my father and that was 1948 in March. First time I saw my father.

Q: How did you get to America?

A: Through --

Q: By boat?

A: By boat, yeah, yeah.

Q: How was -- tell us a little bit about that -- that voyage, that trip.

A: Oh, that was very excited. That was very excited, my gosh, you know? Gosh, you know, that was so excited, see the America. Before we come, we stay in a -- in a -- in a -- we was waiting for -- for visa and -- and the American, they teach us -- they tell us, you know, what is that -- what kind of a life we're gonna have in a -- America. You got all kind of opportunity, if you want to work, if you want to save, you can be millionaire, if you want it. See? That was very excited. And then -- then the boat come, you know, and we go on a boat. Oh, what a good food we had, you know. So many people were sick, I never was sick. I eat for two, for three, you know, my gosh, you know, and I was big that time, you know, I weighed, I don't know, I weighed 220 - 240 pounds. Yeah. So when I

saw -- was very excited when it come to New York. That was, I think, March 22nd, I think, in 1948 when -- when we saw the statue, liberty statue. I had a tears in my eye. And you understand why.

Q: Could you -- could you say that -- I didn't understand what you were saying. You saw the statue of --

A: When we saw the Statue of Liberty, we say, God bless America, this is the free country and this is Statue of Liberty. What I hear so much about the Statue of Liberty from my mother, for years. You know how emotional it was? I can't explain.

Q: Was somebody waiting for you there? Did you -- di -- did they pick you up?

A: No, no, we had a ticket straight to Utica because my father was living in New York [indecipherable] with his outs -- outskirt Utica and we had a train ticket there, and the -- the next day we come to Utica, the first time I saw my father.

Q: How was -- how was that -- how was that meeting, that first meeting, to see him in --

A: You know, it's hard to explain. Tha-That was a -- it is a good question, though. You see, I didn't grow up with my father, I never saw him, you know? I think my father more as a close friend than father. I can't help it, you know? And he was strong, gosh you know, and we look like a brother, you know. So I think I'm more like a brother. And he was good to -- to me. There wasn't many discussion, family discussion you know, and this, you know, about I was in between, you know.

Q: Did he know more or less what had happened to you? Did he ask you about it, did you talk about that at all?

A: Yeah, yeah, we -- yeah, I told him, I explain him, you know, what it was. I was -- spent some time in a concentration camp. Yeah, well, too bad, too bad. Well, he says, this is fault -- your mother fault, you know, she shouldn't go to Europe, you know, she should stay there. Well, on one hand I agree with him, on the other hand I disagree, see, because there was some other reason that she couldn't stay here, see? Yeah, yeah.

Q: So where -- where did you stay when you came? Did you stay with your father, or --

A: Yeah, first three months were stay with -- with my father, and right away they give us the job, wi -- was -- Frieda was learning how to weaving, and I was working in a -- in a factory, clothing factory, you know [indecipherable]. And I make a good money at that time, and we stay three months with my father, you know it's a little bit crowded. So after three months we get a small apartment in Utica on blandin -- Blandina Street, yeah, I never forget that upstairs vi -- over the grocery stores. That was the Italian grocery stores, Jerry, yeah. And we was so happy, my gosh, on our own in United States. Even in a small apartment, we were so happy, so free. And then we was working and start saving some money. Then in 1952 -- no, '51 I think, we bought a small farm there, about 15 kilometer -- 15 miles from here, Vernon Center. And we had some chicken, about three or 400 chickens and some cattle. And we were -- Frieda worked on the farm, I worked on the construction and in the evening I worked on the farm and -- and we was very happy, you know, that -- I -- I [indecipherable] it is the same thing like in Austria, somewhat. Little bit different, but we got the own farm, see. But we had that farm for five years, then I always had it in my mind, you know, to go to my monument business, because that's

what I learned in Flossenbürg, you know, cut the stones, you know. I was -- that helped me too, because I -- really I know when I talk about myself how good I was, but I was good s -- good stoneconner -- cutter. And when you're a good stonecutter you get a little bit more food, you know, and that's what was very important, that's what my friend gave me advice, you know, if you -- if you w-work -- do good, and many times, you know, they give me special jobs, you know, very co-complicated job, and I did it, you know, and I belong -- I used to belong to the best stonecutters there in Flossenbürg. Yes, so I go to the monument business here. I stotes -- I start [indecipherable] I start with a small monument business, and after 15 years I go for the big business, and like you see right here when you look at it through the window, that's our business here, Monument Place, and from then up to now we do very good, and now my son Ricky take over, and I just go once awhile, you know, help him out a little bit.

Q: It's a little bit ironic in a way that you found yourself loving a job that you were forced to learn in a concentration camp, but you liked it later on, yes?

A: Yes, yes, yes. I'd -- I tell you the truth, I used to like better stonecutting than work in a bakery. I didn't like the dough and flour, you know, and dust, you know? But you got dust with the stones too, but -- yes, I -- I like and I like monument business and is very interesting because every day you got something else to cut, different flowers, different sculpture, you know, and lettering and this, you know, and this is very, very interesting cause there's no end to it.

Q: So you were happy to be here, and you gradually started to build a life. You had your own apartment, you rented a farm. But was it alf -- also difficult, maybe a little bit, to adjust to a different country? Was it easy to be with the neighbors in some ways, or not?

A: O-O-Oh yes, oh yes, that -- that, to be honest with you, takes not -- I should say about 10 years, say, because naturally there is a entirely different country than Germany or Poland, you know? Different system, different -- even food. And different living you know? And takes a time, long time to adjust you know, to the custom, you know, how do it -- how the people live, but you like it. You like it, but you gotta adjusted to it, see? Sometime you grab something to do -- oh no, in Europe you go -- do -- do different see? But here you do different. Sometimes says no, that's wrong. No, it isn't wrong when you -- then after you find out, you know, it is right, see? So it takes awhile to adjust, no matter -- I think this is same thing, no matter what country you go. It takes time to adjust to the system, and now, by gosh, after so many years we live in this country, what 50 years? God bless this country, you know? It is the best country on the earth. God bless America.

Q: Did you feel the need to talk about the experience that you went through to anybody else but your wife? Did you find yourself talking to neighbors, or did people want to know, did they ask you?

A: Oh yes, oh yes, and very interesting. Even now, we had several interview, you know, on that radio station where I got my program every Sunday, was three times there, and then we write article to the local paper, [indecipherable] Dispatch. And many people ask us, you know, my gosh [indecipherable] went through, and tell us some more about that.

So I'm glad to tell, and a -- very interesting, you know, the younger generation is so interested in this story, you know. They had no idea, you know. First they thought, you know, that only Jews was in a concentration camp, which is true, nobody can say different, see. Jew -- Jewish people suffered the most, you know, during the war. That was a really Holocaust for them, and they had no help from nowheres, you know. That's true, you know. But also same time, you must say, you know, that many other nationalities suffered -- even worse, some of them, you know. You take those people in Siberia in Russia. My gosh, what they must went through. Even worse, you see? So we are glad to talk about this, you know, and God forbid, you know, that this never happen again, something like that. And young generation, yeah, matter of fact, as you know, I wrote the wa -- article of my recollection to the book for the high schools teachings about the Holocaust. I got my six pages there, my story.

Q: When was -- when was that, and who initiated that?

A: That book?

Q: Mm-hm, how did that come about, and when was that?

A: Oh that was -- oh, well, because, actually the Jewish people start, you know, teaching about the Holocaust for the high schools, see, in New York state. And when we find out that Jewish people gonna -- gonna m-make that book, you know, we also want to be there, y-you know, and tell our story, and we was accepted. And there's some Catholic Christian stories too, in that book. So many people ask if this is true, you know, especially younger people. Is that true, or it is just a propaganda? You know, that gets

you a little bit. What kind of a propaganda? Th-This not propaganda, I got so many evidence, films, books, by gosh, people was there like me, you know. I no lie. I tell -- see, who gon -- whoever gonna listen to this tape, you know, I can't lie, you know, because somebody can straighten me out, hey wait a minutes. You -- you -- you lie about this, or something like that. So we give you that -- that -- that true story where we was going, true, and what we saw, what we experience that time.

Q: So did you feel that your experience as a Polish inmate in a concentration camp was a little bit forgotten by history, in a sense?

A: I think -- I think it is enough books and mention about the Polish people suffered during the second World War. Don't forget. But that was a -- we say six millions Jewish people losted their life during the second war. Oh my gosh, about six million Polish people, Christian people sacrificed their life during that war. So maybe -- maybe this is not the -- how should I say it? This is a little -- a little bit difficult question. But maybe it is -- maybe doesn't -- maybe -- maybe the history doesn't say enough, you know, about Polish people, and not only Polish people, what about other nationalities? What about Russian? What about the other nationalities suffered so many? How many Russians, how many millions, they die, you know? And this -- those people gotta be taken to consideration too, you know. Not only one nationality, see? All of them. And I am glad we had an invitation to Holocaust, to Washington, and we told our story. They treat us nice, you know? And I told them the same story what I tell you right now, that -- and

we're speaking about the Jewish people, yes they suffered the most, and they had no help from nobody, yeah. So we was a little bit more lucky, you know, let's put it this way.

Q: I would like to come back to this a little later, but let's go back in time again to th-the -- more the beginnings of your family here. You had a second child?

A: Yeah, Richard was born 1951, in January. Yeah, and he grow up here as a hundred percent American, okay? And he's still single, he is with us. He got his house next to us, he bought a house, he living in his own house. And he take over our monument business and he work there. And he had a college, yeah, educated. And daughter Frieda, she's also -- oh my gosh, how many languages she speak? She even speak the sign sa -- language and she's a foreman for the organization for the deaf people. Right now she is in New York City, there for a whole week. She got a meeting there. And she is close to us, she live in Syracuse. And we got nice two children and two grandchildren, yeah. And we are very, very happy. It wasn't so easy. There was a hard working, you know. Frieda was working hard, I was working hard. So we come to this, what we today got, you know, we are not millionaire, we -- we are not rich. But we make a good living and we are very happy.

Q: When you had your children, did you have certain dreams for them? Did you -- did you know what you wanted to give your children, what you wanted them to be, certain --

A: Ah, this is another tough question, yeah, and I have to tell you that true. Yes, many times come to me, and to be honest with you, sometime I not believe that happen to me, I go through this, you know, that wasn't me. Then I think, you know, yes, that was me. I

go through this. I give you example. How can you feel, let's say January, February, you know, you're co -- you work 10 hours, wintertime I was working 10 hours in a quarry. You come, they counted you, somebody's missing, okay? The wind blows, snow, cold, below zero, you know? You stay without a hat, you stay [indecipherable] what that means, attention?

Q: Attec -- yeah, attention.

A: Yeah. And they count and count, one prisoner is missing and you stay there for two, three hours, hungry and cold, don't move. How can you this explain to anybody what that is? So, those days, you know, happened many times. Coming back to me. I says, how can you -- or how can you go through this? This is impossible, yeah. That was possible. Yeah, so sa -- those -- yeah, every time you see those faces, you know, familiar faces, SS, commandant, inspection, you know.

Q: So this --

A: And you thought this is no end to it, you know?

Q: So it seems very unreal to you now?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you -- but m-my question was actually, did you have any -- di -- how did you want your children to bri -- how did you want your children to grow up? Did you have certain dreams for them? Something that you wanted to give them, or --

A: No, no.

Q: -- how did you want to do parenting? Did you have any --

A: We didn't talk much about that, and even now we no talk much about that, you know, and thanks God, w-was going through, it did -- didn't affect our mind, you know, or nervous break or something like that, no. No. I always got answer for myself and Frieda same thing, you know. Thanks God. Could be a worse, you know. But time to time you know, it comes, you know. Some happenings, you know, what is hard to believe, even for me, even for me, I saw it with my own eye what happened, you know? Yeah.

Q: Did your children ask you sometimes about that time?

A: Yes.

Q: Or did that not come up much -- I mean, how -- how did it -- di-did you talk about it?

A: Sometime yes, sometime, just a -- so much, you know, they ask, yeah, how was it, yeah, this and this, yeah. And then -- but actually, we not talk much about that, see? But me and Frieda, many time you know, we got the breakfast, okay, we got ham and eggs -- ham and eggs, and good bread, you know, good coffee, [indecipherable] you know. Did you ever think, you know, we gonna live again, you know, like people live? Did you ever think we gonna have breakfast like that? Or sometime for dinner, you know, a good steak, you know, a pork roast, you know, my gosh, you know how much you give in a concentration camp if you can have just a little bone out of it, you know? So we -- we talk so -- with Frieda when the children are not here, we says, gosh, you know, we talk how it was.

Q: I think we should change the cassette again. This is the end of tape two, side A interview with jul -- Julian Noga. This is --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Julian Noga. This is tape number two, side B. Did you make any friends that came from the same experience, that also went through a concentration camp experience, jail or prison?

A: We're still in contact with a few others. One of them is a very close friend to me, Dr. Jake Terry, T-e-r-r-y. He is a doctor in New York City, and he is very active in ex-prisoners organization, he go [indecipherable] every year. He had -- they had meetings, you know, and they make lots of changes there in a concentration camp. Like I said, the -- the Laundromat was located in a -- in a washroom where we used to take a shower. All the electric factory was located in a kitchen, our kitchen used to be. And some French company built up the little factory there, right in a concentration camp. And Jake didn't like that, and I didn't like that, and we discussed it, and Jake, with the rest of it -- members of that organization, they put the pressure on the Bavarian government to eliminate those private -- or in a commandanture, there was a regular, people was living there, you know, like a apartment, they change for the apartment. So those people was move and they gonna remodel that building inside, and they gonna keep it as a museum, see? And the washroom gonna be remodel inside, they moved the Laundromat, and the kitchen and the appelleplatz, the square where we used to ha -- you know, when we would get together, you know, the -- the appelleplatz, you know, it's gonna be cleaned,

some trees gonna -- bushes gonna be cut, and you know -- and they gonna bring it to the -- more to the same look as it was that time, you know. And that -- thanks -- thanks to ja -- Dr. Jake Terry and Paul Wash. Paul -- Paul Wash, he just recently received a medal from Israel, Israel government, because him and his father save quite a few Jewish people during the war, you know, he was awarded, you know, as a -- a -- as a -- a -- as a man who saved some lives, you know, and he lives in New York City, and we are in contact too.

Q: Did you go back -- ever go back to Flossenbürg?

A: Oh yes, several times, yes, yes. The first time was the worst. When I came to the little museum what they got in there by the cremation there, not far away. Then I looked at it, all pictures, the commandant and the -- how the prisoners was working in a quarry and this and this, then in the middle I saw the pretty good size picture there, and there was a bunch of prisoners, and there was a kapo, and -- and -- and they was receiving the soup. And guess what? I recognize myself. Then I almos -- I almost fainting, you know, I -- I couldn't believe it, I called Frieda na -- says, "Frieda, look at this picture, and you see anything unusual?" She looked at it closer, she says, "Julian, that's you." Second in a -- in a first row, you know, yeah. And then -- then I remember, you know, and we go -- that was the first day in a -- in a -- a quarry. After two weeks where we was on a [indecipherable] block, the newcomers blocks, you know, we was there 14 days, that's the time, you know, the SS officer ask me, you know, if I know why I am here, you know, and -- yeah. And then -- then I remember there was a small -- we make a joke

[indecipherable] I remember this exactly, you know, because usually the SS was tall guys, you know, and this, but that photographer SS man, he was a -- a little guy, red hair. And he had a big camera, you know, like a accordion, black one. And he make the picture and says, no wonder -- we make a joke out of it, no wonder, you know, they no want him on the front, you know, this -- he's got the right job just to make a picture. And that picture -- who knows how, you know, survive and I'm -- and this is the best evidence you know, if somebody says no, you wasn't there. And why I -- this is very interesting -- why I know that was the first day in the quarry, because we had a -- a wooden -- wooden shoes, you know, wooden soles. And then a -- and that same day I was -- they gave me to the kettakommando, we -- we climbed a -- in a quarry, you know, on a stone, and we'll put the ke -- chains around the big blocks and the crane pull them out from the -- from the quarry. And they give us leather shoes. So that first day, I'm standing there with wooden shoes that I know that was from August, let's say 17 - 18, August 18, ni -- 1942, see, the picture was made. And I'm on that picture.

Q: When was that first trip when you went back?

A: Oh gosh, the -- for a long time I no want to go there. I told you the truth. I didn't want to see it. I was scared, you know? But then we decided, me and my family, Frieda, daughter Frieda and son Richard to go. And that was -- I believe, you know, I can't tell you exactly the -- whether -- that was ninese -- 1980 -- '83 - '84, I come first time to the Flossenbürg. Was everything change, you know. The trees growing you know, bushes

growing, then I see their factories there, then the -- all barracks gone, they got the one family houses, you know, where the barracks was there. I didn't like it.

Q: How -- how did your children respond to that? Did you have a feeling that they understood something in a different way than before, or what was their response?

A: The daughter -- daughter Frieda want to run away, you know, from that concentration camp. She couldn't -- you know, she was shaking, you know, and she couldn't believe it when she saw the cremation oven, you know, it's still there, you know, untouched, yeah. And when she saw that, she knew, and she see those pictures, see my picture over there, she want to run away. But we make videotapes there and they stay, then -- then after that we go -- we go Germany, Austria, most every two, three years we go there, you know, we still go on there, you know, because Frieda got some relatives there, sisters. And when we go there, naturally, we stop in Flossenbürg, you know, just look at, you know, and --

Q: W-Why --

A: Is -- is interesting though.

Q: Yeah, that was -- that was my -- my other question. Why did you decide to go back after the first time? Was that important to you to go back to that place for some reason?

A: Yes, because I -- I was talking to some people, they were there. And I says, you should go, you should see, there's -- everything is change, but a few houses, you know, and a few things are still there. It is a beautiful chapel build up from the towers, you know, watch towers. Beautiful chapel. And I thought, my gosh, maybe I should go and see that place and go to that chapel and thank God, you know, we survive, you know. So

we go and I'm glad we go, we -- we saw and after that we go almost every two years there, and we stop there, and that most important to be there, that was 50 anniversary, you know, when the concentration camp was free, liberated. And you wouldn't believe -- before we go there -- first I thought I don't know, should we go or not? But, one of the guy from Arizona, his name i -- was Bob Hager, he find out about me in a United States Holocaust -- he saw the movie, and he called me, and he -- over the telephone he introduce himself and he says, "I'm the one from the Third Army, I open the gate there, in concentration camp Flossenbürg." I says, "Oh my gosh. Thanks. Where you live?" Oh, here in Arizona, I retired, so and so, and wa -- I was in a 97 division of Third Army, General George Patton. So this gonna be 50 anniversary and I'm in contact with the Munich government there, with the minister, and I got invitation and probably you gonna get invitation too. And we should go, and we should meet there. I says, okay, we go. Yeah, then I go with the whole family. But before, I says, I want to do something. Then I call Bob, and I told him over the telephone what I want to do. Some kind of mark, like a bronze plaque, to thank Third Army for liberation. He says, yes, that's a good idea. I gonna call up Munich and I gonna tell them, you know, and they gonna find a place where they want to put that -- that plaque. Good, good idea. So he called me back, he says, yes I already -- I already talked to minister so and so in Munich. I says, good idea, and that plaque what Julian Noga gonna design, we can put it in death valley on a wall. There is a wall there between the chapel and -- and death valley, and he can put it there. And when he -- when he make this plaque, I give him the help, and they help him, you

know, to -- to place that plaque there. Okay. So I design that plaque. I put pretty good size, oh I don't know, 28 inches by 18 inches high bronze plaque. And then I put in the left corner on top, I put American Sherman tank. Then in right corner on top I put that emblem, the -- from that 97 division emblem they had, there is like a fork, like a devil fork or something like that, you know? That was the emblem for the division. So I put that emblem in the right corner on top and then I say, well, thanks to the American, you know, for liberation this and this, then I put Julian Noga, number 1623, and other prisoners, to thank Americans, see? So when we -- when I -- when I bring that plaque over there, I had two workers there, what they take care of that place, and they had the drill, and they, you know, we already told them, you know, how this gonna be put in the wall, in the granite wall. And they drill up the -- for me, four holes, you know, and I set that plaque myself with my own hand there. And that was something so -- so -- Saturday and Sunday there was a big doing, speeches, you know, and people coming from all over, ex-prisoners, you know, there was -- they say was about 7,000, I don't know it was 7,000 there. There was Dr. Jack Terry there, there was -- with his daughter, and there was Paul Wash there -- Wash, he was with his wife, and there was some other prisoners there from New York City, from Poland come in whole -- two buses come in from Poland, ex-prisoners, and for German ex-prisoners, and from all Czechoslovaks, Russians, you know, from all over, lots of flowers, some speeches, you know, and that was very, very interesting. And we had a special praying that chapel, there was a German bishop, you know, special prayer for all of us, you know. That was very -- and the Jewish people had

a nice ceremony there, by the Jewish monument and also they had prayer and we was with them and that was very emotional, you know, we -- we feel like brothers, you know? That doesn't mean you are Jewish or German or Polish or whatever, or Czechs, or French, you know? We was like -- like brothers, you know? We respect each other because only we know what we was going through.

Q: Is remembering --

A: So -- excuse me, I didn't finish yet, yeah. And the Bob was there, the Bob Hager, he was there and when it come time, you know, the plaque was covered with the white cloth. When it come time, the -- Bob Hager and me, we unveiled that plaque in death valley there, where the execution they had almost every day there, you know, with so many people die over there, and that was a great moment you know. And Bob Hager lay beautiful -- with his wife Peggy, he lay a beautiful flowers there by that plaque and that was very -- he put, and then after that there was a program, you know, and there was many speeches there from different nationalities, you know? And even the mayor from Flossenbürg, he says, I am 56 years old, I was born after the war. I'm sorry, you know, that you people have to got through this. I'm sorry that our quiet, willa -- village come on a map as a certain -- as such a bad place. He had a nice speech, and says, of course, we are not responsible for this what happen in our quiet village, but also we got that black spot in our history. I'm sorry for that. Such a beautiful speech he had.

Q: Were there other responses from -- from Germans? Did people approach you in any way, did you hear any kind of reaction from people who were there?

A: Oh, my gosh, there was a -- there was another -- another mayor from Ravensbrück, there was some high officials, you know, and they come -- they follow us, they ask us question. And television cameras and -- and a radio -- those people from the radio station, you know. Gosh, we was so busy, you know, and they ask question, you know, and that was very interesting, you know, very interesting. And again I say that usually younger generation, you know, that was so -- for them that was so interested, you know, what it was, that -- Flossenbürg concentration camp.

Q: Is remembering important to you? Apparently it is, but is it -- i -- is also painful, but -- but is it -- is it important to you to remember, and what do you do to keep the memory alive when you are getting older and older --

A: Yes, well this is -- I got my own explanation for myself, see? That was a wartime, and gosh in a wartime, many, man -- this no -- no war, you know, is honest on either side, you know. And during the wartime so many people had it worse, maybe worse than -- than -- than -- than me, you know, like take any Jewish family, you know, like I meet -- even the Dr. Terry, you know, he losted a whole family there, he is by himself. And many other Jewish people, you know, they losted their whole family, you know? And also some Polish people losted their family in a concentration camp, and -- and was -- you know, there could be a worse, you know, but maybe of this experience I explain myself, what we was going through, maybe make a -- maybe this experience make me a better man, you know, and that's why I'm so busy, you know, with this social organization, you know, and I try help other people. And I try tell the people that life can be a different, you

know. And, you know, it bothers me when I see that the American, you know, make a demonstration, and sometime they burn the American flag, you know, that hurts. I -- I say, people, you don't know what you're doing. You don't know that the life can be a different. And matter of fact, you know, if I was young boy when the older people says, you know, what they was going through the first World War, I laugh and I says, ah what -- they say they eat rotten potatoes, you know and this and this. My gosh, it's happen, I no have to wait long enough and I eat rotten potatoes. I -- and this is hard to believe, why rotten potatoes? I tell you why. When a potatoes is rotten, you cut the bad -- bad part out of it, and rest of it is little bit yellish -- brownish, you know? Rotten potatoes is sweeter, and healthy potatoes is bitter, that's why. So I remember what the older people says, we used -- then we was so hungry we eat the rotten potatoes. Yes, I understand, now, see? So -- but when a -- when it comes -- you know, at that time, I didn't pay my -- m-much attention, you know, oh gosh, there was a first World War. So what? So what? They was born in wrong time, you know, I was born after the war, you know, I'm lucky. But by gosh I not have to wait too long -- too long, you know, to go maybe even worse what they was going through. See, then I find out -- that's why, you know, that experience, that life what we had, maybe make a be -- better man out of me, you know? Maybe I appreciate it more, what we had, you know, the life, the freedom, you know. What is really important.

Q: You mentioned social work or some charity work. Tell us a little bit more about that. When did you start doing it, and what is it, actually, that you are doing?

A: Well, first when we come -- when we come to this country, there was that time, you know, when President Truman was president, and a -- of United States, and he made that President Truman Act, you know, for the DP persons, for the -- for those people who couldn't go back to the Communist country, you know, so they -th-the border was open for -- to this country you know, and here in Utica, besides me, come in -- many, many people come in. Some of them was in the concentration camp, but most of them, you know, they was working in the -- on the farms, like I was working on a farm first, and in the factories, you know? Then we -- well, we come to this country like I told you from the beginning you know, e-everything was strange over here, was beautiful but strange. So we organize ourselves, and I was one of the co-organizer i-in this organization. We named that organization the newcomer's organization, see? So we started making shows, you know, and whatever money we had, we have some orphans in Germany, some widows, you know, the money was going, you know? There was like a charity organization. And thanks God, you know, I was 35 years president of this organization. Then I organized another organization what is Kopernik Memory Association. So my idea was to have another organization with the Polish background, you know, to tell us about the Polish history, you know, Polish culture. And same time we collect enough money, you know, on 45,000 dollars, and we build up the beautiful statue here in Utica. That was my idea, I must say, Kopernik statue, 21 feet high and stays right in the center of the city of Utica, across the street from the Munson Proctor Ins -- Institute -- museum, see. And I'm very proud about that, and we had other people, you know, I like. Then I

start radio program, Polish and international music I play every Sunday for two hours on the local station here, on the other side woods there, you know, I can walk over there, you know, I live close to it. And this is my hobby and I'm very happy, you know, very busy you know, between radio station organization, I belong to quite a few of them, and our business, you know. Keep me busy, I get no ol -- no time to get old.

Q: Did you keep up a little bit with the discussion about Jewish-Polish relationships in Poland in the 70's, and then in the later 80's this become a -- a difficult discussion to -- in Poland, to di -- to discuss that more openly than it was before. Did you keep up with that a little bit? Do you think it's -- the -- the process of working through this very difficult subject matter is -- is happening?

A: This is a -- a very delicate question, you know. I grow up with the Jewish people, as I told you from the beginning, you know. Matter of fact, I had the Jewish girl, we was very close with the -- nothing was there, not -- we was not in love, no, absolutely. But we grow up together and thanks God, you know, she survive, you know. She had the Christian paper, she emigrate to Germany. She was working on a farm in Germany, as a Polish girl and she married a Polish guy, you know, and her father was killed, and -- during the war, and her mother was killed, too, you know, and she was the only one there, you know. So we grow up with the Jewish people and I had nothing against the Jewish people there in -- in -- in Poland, absolutely, you know. That was a -- more like a tradition, you know, if you want to buy something you go in a Jewish store, you know, you buy, you know, you get good deal, you know? But -- and Jewish people in Poland, I

think there was about three and a half -- three and a half million Jewish people in Poland, you know. There was more Jewish people in Poland that time than today in Israel, see? And -- and they had businesses, they had heavy industry that was in Jewish hand, too, and I think they was treating, you know, very well, they -- we had doctor and -- doctors and professors and scientists and all kind of -- you know, and that was -- that was -- I think they was treating good. But here, after years, time to time, I see some articles in the paper that -- that we aren't -- that we are, Polish people, anti-Semitic. Now, this is, to me, a little bit hurts me this, this accusation. Because I wasn't anti-Semitic. I live -- I had a friend, Jewish friend, and I still got Jewish friend here. Jake Terry is a example. I have here in Utica many Jewish people are good friends, close friends. And that hurts sometime when they accuse us, you know, to -- that the Polish people are anti-Semitic, yeah. Well, gosh, you know, I don't know what they mean. Well, this happened -- see, our -- somebody, you know, another Christian make a denunciation on me, you know, about the [indecipherable] what I tell you about, you know? How about Frieda, you know, some people make a denunciation. So you got bad people here, here, and I believe, you know, maybe that was some anti-Semitic, you know, in -- in Poland between some kind of people, you know, not -- not me, you know. And when you say the Polish people, then you talk about all Polish people, that I'm included, ex -- as a -- as a -- a -- from a Polish background, you know? And we -- I think we shouldn't say that, that -- you know. I believe that some people was anti-Semitic and maybe today you -- you -- you'll find them, see? Like you find here in this country, anti-American people, right? Yeah? When I

listen to -- to Rush Limbaugh, you know, I wonder -- I wonder, you know, what kind of an American he is, you know, when he called our president stupid, and a liar and this and this, call him name, you know? That's for me -- that hurts me, too, you know? I mean, this is a very delicate -- delicate question, you know, between the Christian and Jewish people in Poland. But I think that Poland opened the border for seven century, when the other countries, you know, chase out the Jewish, you know, like Spain or other countries chase out the Jewish people, Poland take them, you know, and for seven century, the Jewish people was in Poland. And my gosh, you know, maybe there was some incidents, you know, I don't know about that, see? But as I remember, you know, like y-you take a -- even little city like Struchin or Tarnów. My gosh, the -- most of the population was Jewish population and the businesses, most of them was in Jewish hands. So that was, I think, I don't know if you -- if you say criticize, this is -- I-I don't know, I haven't got no answer, you know.

Q: This is the end of tape two, side B, interview with Julian Noga.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial interview with Julian Noga. This is tape number three, side A. I would like to go back in time a little bit when your children were young. What -- what was your life like then? You both worked? Di- Did your wife still work?

A: That's right. I worked first shift, she worked second shift, or the other way. She worked first shift and I worked second shift, th -- so we was with -- one of us, you know, was with the children, see?

Q: But that was not an easy -- an easy life.

A: Was kind of tough, but we didn't know the difference and we do our best, and by gosh you know, we was thinking, you know, to let the children grow in a -- in a good house, you know, and later on they get good education and we was very successful with this, thanks God.

Q: Say a little bit more about the education of your children. They got -- they went to high school and then to college, both of them?

A: No, Frieda, which is our ol -- older -- older daughter, let's put it this way. Yeah, she was born in Austria. She go high school, then she take some courses, you know, like typewriting and shorthand. And she was very good with the languages, so she speak fluently, she take German in the high school. She speak fluently German, fluently Polish, English. And after she get married she take another course to speak sign language. And now she has good job in Syracuse, New York. And she is the boss there, you know, she's

got a group of people she work for, then -- and she do very good with the sign language. And she is good for the catch up -- with the languages, to learn, and -- other languages, let's put it this way. Okay, and Ricky, Ricky was different, you know? She learned a little bit German, he can keep the con -- conversation in -- in German and in Polish. And he finished the high school, and then she go -- then he go college, yeah. And after he finished the college, he get a good job, he work for the big insurance company as a safety inspector. But the insurance is -- lately, you know, they change a little bit, and same time I need him here for our business, you know, because we want to continue with the business after oh, you know, after 40 years I build up that business and I -- I don't want to let it go, so I invite him here, and he is already what, four or fifth year with me, and I teach him how to carve, how to do the monuments and he is very, very good in that, he's got a good hand, cause -- because he's a little painter on the side, you know, that picture you see over here on the wall, that's his painting right there. Which is pretty good, I -- I should say. So in the monument business, he is pretty artistic and he's got new idea and put the new designs, new flowers, new carvings, you know, he is good for that, and I'm glad, you know, so the name stays in business after I go, see?

Q: Was -- was he naturally interested, or did you -- or -- or was -- wh-what did he do before? Was that sort of a natural interest of him when you asked him, or did you had to put a little pressure on him to say please, you know --

A: Well, like I said, you know, he had a -- after he fini -- finished the college, he had a pretty good job there in Michigan there. And that was going good for awhile, then getting

a little bit slowdown and [indecipherable] and when he come home we had a good discussion over here, and I told him simply, you know, I getting older, you know, and here is the business, you know, everything, all the equipment, trucks, all equipment, you know, just -- what you need just to start working, you know, and I teach you, you know? He had pretty good idea though, because he grow up actually, into the business. But no matter what, you know, you've got to practice, and you know, you got to learn. So -- and he was -- he learned quick, you know, how to do that monument job, see? Yeah, so he is pretty good with it and I am glad.

Q: What -- what -- what do you consider kind of highlights in your life here in America? Was there anything that was especially proud f -- proud thing for you, or something that sort of stands out?

A: The -- the big -- big day for us, me and Frieda was when we become citizens of this country. I get my paper in 1956 and she's got her citizenship paper, '58 -- eight? '57. That was the great moment, you know, when we become American citizens, you know. And this is a -- a very touchy -- I should say privilege, you know, for anybody love this country. And number two, for the first time in my life, you know, when it comes election, you know, so we can go to the election place, and we can vote, you know, that means so much to us. So that day, afternoon is off by us, like a holiday. We dressed up. I never go without a tie, you know, to vote, you know, this special privilege to me. And we feel very comfortable we can vote, because we never vote before. So that was -- yeah, that was the wa -- couple highlights which occur, you know, in our life, you know, speaking about the

citizenships and -- and all the [indecipherable]. Then, of course, you know, our 25th anniversary of marriage, then 50 anniversary of the marriage, quite some time ago, that was a highlights, too. And many times happen in organization who I belong, they gave me some certificate for the good job, you know. They make a special banquet for us. There was one banquet for that 50 anniversary of liberation of concentration camp. The Polish community make a special banquet for us, we had about 250 people, and many congratulation and there was a high official from the county, from the city, and congratulate us. And that was very interesting to us, we turn a little bit back, you know, to accept a invitation from United States Holocaust in Washington, D.C.. I must say that was very interesting, and very important to us to tell our story for the future generation, you see? And I must say there, in Holocaust, they treat us like a royal, you know? Really, you know, we enjoy every minute there, when we was there and something like Holocaust -- United States Holocaust in Washington, this is very important and I give credit to the organizer that's -- that -- that -- that m-miserable time we lived through, second World War, that is not forgotten, you know, that is somehow documented, you know, right there, and this is United States Holocaust in Washington, and I give a credit to those people, organizers, donors -- and we are donors of -- a-also. Yeah. Sometime I mix, you know, word German, you excuse me, when I speak English.

Q: I can translate, that's -- that's all right. What did -- what did you give to the museum, for example?

A: Well, first of all, we -- we gave some money, donation, yeah, yeah. Couple times --

Q: But you also gave some objects, I think?

A: Yes, we gave many pictures, that's what they ask us for, from our families, from the concentration camp. And also I have to make a -- how should I say, I diverse my jacket, you know, that striped jacket from concentration camp. I had that original striped jacket, and by many occasion, whether in a church or by many occasion, I wore that jacket, you know, when I had a speech, when -- when that was something about the Holocaust. And when I come in Washington, you know, they tell me, make sure bring that jacket. So I did bring that jacket there. And you know, that was some kind -- I -- was hard to -- to give that jacket because you know, this was like a diverse you know? That jacket keep me warm, you know, there in concentration camp, and I have to -- but I thought, on the other hand, okay, this is the right place for the jacket, you know, so the future generation can see what kind of a clothing you had. How I was dressed up, see? Yeah, and that was -- that was a little bit emotional.

Q: Maybe you can speak a little bit more about the society that you belonged to. Maybe you can say the name one more time, but also a little bit more about the work that you do. How many members, what -- what do you do --

A: Like for ins --

Q: -- what kind of work?

A: -- like for instance, the -- the -- that -- that organization like [indecipherable] I -- I am co-founder. Have about a hundred, over a hundred members, you know, and strictly work for charity, you know? We help some poor people, blind people, you know, just -- just

strictly charity or-organization to get the money for th -- for that purpose, we organize twice a year, sometime three times a year, some kind of dancing, or -- or banquet so we get the money for that purpose. This is wa -- wa -- one of the organization. The second one, I'm also co-founder, that was my idea Kopernik Memorial Association. Now this organization is on a different level, it's not so much charity organization, but it's a organization where they got their own museum and they had so many Polish items. What they demonstrate and show, like for the teacher, for the students, you know, what is this about the Poland, you know, what kind of a country this is, you know, the culture, you know, and this -- and this is -- and then they got films, pictures, a-and scholarship, yeah, for -- for the students, that every year they gave three scholarship to the students. And this is an or-organization I am very proud about too, because is a -- a -- and we got the members, you know, we got teachers, you know, professors, businessmen, and also ordinary people. But these are very high class organization, let's put it this way. And they also gave me medal and I am there now honorable chairman of this organization. Then, also we belong to the Polish community club. We got quite a good size of Polish ethnic group here in Utica. We should say probably 28 - 30 percent pe -- Polish people are with -- Polish American people with the background, and also the newcomers steady come in, see, to this country, like any others, you know, like Mexican or Italians or any other [indecipherable] you know, they come in. That's why I got the radio program for them, you know, for all of them you know, and play polka, you know, and -- and nice music, international -- yes. So this is --

Q: Let's -- let's talk about that radio program a little bit.

A: Yeah.

Q: When -- when did you -- when did you start it, and what's the radio station called, and what do you -- what do you do, actually? What do you do --

A: This is the biggest and oldest radio station in Utica, WIBX Utica-Rome, my -- my fair -- my 50, yeah -- dial my 50. That station itself this year, what is 19 -- what is 2000, celebrate this year their -- their -- their seven -- 75th anniversary when they start, the very first station in Utica. They had just the two, three hours daily program, you know, at that time. Then, five years after, which is no -- that was 1925 when the radio station, first program had. Then 1930, friend of mine, the late Mr. Louis Bienkowski, he started that Polish American program on that station in 1930, and he had that program for 56 years. Then after that, like I said before, his niece took over, and she had it for the while, Maria Kowalski. And then after, I took over what is oh, good 10 years, and since then piece -- til today, I'm still every Sunday there for two hours, from eight to 10 on that station and playing music, advertise some businesses, and we give news -- newses, local and even from -- from Poland, you know. And people tell me this is very interesting program, I don't know. I think so. So this is my hobby, and --

Q: What -- what other -- so I just was about to ask you, what are your hobbies? So, doing the radio show, that's one hobby. Do you have another hobby?

A: No, then I strictly concentrate on the monuments, you know, with the new designs, see? This is my hobby. Once something new come, you know, new design -- oh, that

lady, oh she was feeding all life, that -- birds, you know, let's say, you know, cardinals, she want cardinal on her monument, you know? One in each corner, you know, two of them. Matter of fact we got [indecipherable] two of them do -- we just finish it, see? Also, ma -- other people [indecipherable] they had such a nice dog, you know, they got the picture, you know. The dog die, you know, but they want that dog on a -- on a monument. You know, that sometime looks to some people kind of foolish, you know, dog on the monument, but I tell you, whoever ga -- love the animals, you know, the dog is like a -- a family member. So we put on. All -- the other guy, he was a farmer, he want tractor on a -- on a -- on -- on a -- on a monument. So the other guy, he was a good skier, he want ski, or -- o-or a motorcycle, or car, you know, anything. I mean, something like that, you put on a monument, you carve with your own hand, you know? And after you finish it, he says, "Hey Julie, you did a good job." [indecipherable] oh, what a beautiful job you did. How you do it? How you do it? And now my son Ricky, he do the same thing, he follow me exactly, yeah. And he has so many credit and so many beautiful cards, thank you cards come in, you know? And people satisfied. That gives you, you know, great satisfaction, you know? You do something, really, you know, what -- what you like, and what people like.

Q: You mentioned in the beginning of this interview that you went back to Poland in 1960 sometime to see your mother again. Did you go by yourself, or did you have --

A: I go by myself, yeah, at that time.

Q: Could -- could you say a little bit more about that experience? Did you feel -- did you feel Polish again, or --

A: No, I'm sorry to say that -- well, all depends, you know, what extent, you know? I loo -- feel -- I know I was born -- this is some, you know, I was looking for those [indecipherable] roads, you know, I used to -- I used to go -- and everything come to me so small, you know, so different, you know, after -- after 20 years you know, when I come there. Houses, I -- I couldn't recognize many things, see? And that was different. Then, that was 1960, then 1979, Frieda, my wife want to go, want to see that country I was born. Okay, you go. So we both go. Yeah, and that was very interesting, and that was more changes in Poland. They had electricity, they had all over country, they had the new roads through the country, the buses was going. They had so many orchards. Before, I didn't see those orchards too many, you know. And people -- people lived different, entirely different. And you know, because that time, since 1939 to 1979, that time you miss, you know, and now this is a question, would you like to live here? My answer, sorry to say, you know, no. Because that time I miss, and find out what you -- hurts. I no belong no more here. When I come on JK -- how JK -- airport there in feena --

Q: JFK?

A: J -- [indecipherable] yeah. I advertise JFK on the radio, you know. I got mixed up with that airport. You know what I did first? I touched the ground and I kiss it and I look for the hot dogs. That was my first reaction when I come back. Yeah. So, because you know, I la -- I lived there in Poland up to 18 years, then after, you know, I live almost nine years

in Germany and in Austria. Then we live so many years in this country, you know, so with the time, you know, you no belong no more there. Sorry to say that, you know?

Q: H-How did your mother live? Did she -- was it still in the same village, or did -- wa --

A: The same village, yeah, very simple, you know, nothing -- nothing special, but we help her, you know, we -- we send her packages because there was a -- three other brothers, Matthew, Bruno and John. They was in Massachusetts, Chicopee, Massachusetts. I was here in Utica, so we send the packages, little money. So my mother had a good life after the war. During the war she had it tough.

Q: What did you -- did she tell you more about that, what happened to her during the war while you were there, or was that something you didn't talk too much about?

A: No, I did ask her, yeah -- well, she was working o -- for herself, on that piece of land which she had and also she had some other, bigger farmers you know, she worked there, and -- and -- and she make a -- she make a good living, you know, she wor-wor -- was working hard. It wasn't easy for her, you know. Then she was very happy, very happy. She says that God did listen to my prayer, what I pray, and she promise in that little church in our town, when I survive she gonna buy statue, Sacred Heart Jesus statue what they carry in processional, she did. She bought that statue to thank God, you know, for -- well, she was a strictly regi -- religious lady, you know, strict, maybe sometime too much, you know, every day she go church, you know. Winter, you know, early in the morning, six o'clock, you know, she's going to church, you know. She was like that, you

know. Little bit too much, I -- I ha -- I should say, see. But that was her belief and -- and that's what she did, yeah.

Q: What was your relationship to -- to your parents-in-law? To your in-laws in -- in Austria? Did you go and visit them on a regular basis?

A: O-Oh yes, oh yes.

Q: Did they come to visit you in America?

A: N-No, no, just the one si -- her sister come, Marianne, she come visit us way back, oh, I don't know, 10 - 15 years ago, and she stay here for a couple weeks. Then after that her niece, Kretty Stirk, she come with the husband and daughter. Kretty is the daughter from the oldest sister to my wife. Margaret. And they stay here six weeks, and that was very interesting. And when we go there in Austria, as I said before, you know, a stopover in Germany, and then we go to Austria and we -- we had a good time, you know, and -- and when her parents was still alive, their father, I di -- after we come here, I -- father didn't see any more. He die before I go that time 1960 when I go -- after I visit Poland, I go Austria, the mutter -- mother still was there, still living, you know, she was in good shape, but retired from -- from the farmhouse, you know. The older si -- daughter Margaret had the f-farm. But they got nice villa in the city, see, belongs to the parents. And she was there, and -- and Frieda's younger sister across the street had a nice restaurant. I stay overnight there, yeah. And eat good, and good wine, you know? Austrian wine, and wiener schnitzel and sauerbraten, you know, whatever. And good pastry.

Q: Enough to eat.

A: Yes, they feed me good, you know. That was very interesting and mutter, I'm glad because m -- I told mutter how we live, you know, and this, and she was very happy, you know, we are together, we make a good living in this country, and she was very happy. Then Frieda after that go more often, I don't know, two, three times she saw her mother before she died. So they -- they agree with us, you know, for us was no other ways than come United States, you know, make a -- start new life, you know, in this country, which was good, I think. And we appreciate it, and they appreciate it, too. That was appreciated.

Q: We haven't talked about your brothers, I d -- I don't think. Did you have a relationship with them in America? Did they -- where did they live, in different places? And did you have some kind of contact or relationship with them?

A: Yeah, I-I come to New York News, which is by outskirt of Utica, my father was there, living with stepmother, and my brothers was living in Chicopee, Massachusetts, three of them. Matthew, Bruno and John. And time to time, for holidays or during the summer, either they come in here, or we go there. And we -- we understand each other, you know, in certain extent, because you know, they were here [indecipherable] you know, and they was thinking they are a little bit better than I am, you know, I -- I told you the truth, you know, as a -- so, but they were good. They were good, I can't complain. Yeah, so they try and teach me something, you know, that's what they want to teach me, I already knew, you know, and -- but we was in a good understanding, you know, between us, yeah.

Q: And then you also got grandchildren, at one point?

A: Yeah. Two of them. Frieda's -- their oldest son, our daughter Frieda's oldest son, our grandson, Todd. He finished college, and he was a -- a -- a -- a very interesting in sport. Matter of fact, he was the number two in Syracuse as a soccer player. And he finished the college, he get the degree, and he become a -- he get a good job there, in Watertown, what is about hundred miles from here, up north, towards Canadian border. He get the job there, then he meet the beautiful lady, also teacher, Tina, and they get married. They already married over a year, yeah, and no children yet. And they bought the house, and they both teaching, you know, and they -- they make a good living. And Eric, the younger one, he's still with mother, live with mother, and go college, yeah. And he is interesting something in a job like artistic, very -- you know, television, something like that, I don't know which direction he's gonna go, but he is a very smart guy, you know. Ah, we're very proud about those two. And our son Richard, as you see, you talked to him not long ago, yeah. He's still single, you know. He not rush to -- to be married, see. And we no push him.

Q: This is the end of tape three, side A, interview with Julian Noga.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Julian Noga. This is tape number three, side B. I just had a question and now I've completely forgotten them, so let me just -- let me just think one second.

A: Yeah.

Q: Di-Did you ever feel that Americans in general, or that the younger generation doesn't really know enough about Poland, so that you're assoc -- that your society has really taught younger people much more about Poland?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Could you give maybe an example, also, if you have one?

A: That was -- that was for some time the younger generation, American younger generation, they didn't know much about the Poland, that was not much to them --- to ye -- ye -- I mean, it was not interesting. Besides, you know, Chopin was Polish, you know, Maria Curie-Sklodowska, Paderewski was a good artist, and -- and General Kasimir Pulaski, and [indecipherable] for this country, and General Kasimir Pulaski was wounded and died there in Georgia that time in the war, you know, die for this country. They know a little bit, little bit a-about that, see, but really th-that -- the more interesting was to the younger generation, here in this country, when Holy Father John Paul the second become Holy Father as a pole -- Polish cardinal, then the people was more interested where he come from? Ah, he is Polish. What he was doing during the war? Well, this and this, you know, and they -- then they -- they -- and that was interesting, I think, and they was more interesting, you know, to find out, you know, what -- what kind of a country is the Poland, you know? I speak generally, you know [indecipherable]. Then a second, when a -- when a Communist was -- we think was so strong and we thought, you know, nobody gonna fight Communist you know, and the Communist gonna be forever, here a simple co -- guy come from the Gdansk, Lech Walesa, and he started that strike what was

impossible that time, you know, in any Communist country. He started it and he get 10 million workers behind him. And this is very interesting, without the one shot to be fired, you know, he defeated the Communists, you know. Thanks to him, you know, and the Holy Father was helping too, and I must say, that time, President Reagan help also, you know [indecipherable] like he call on Gorbachev, come on, get down with the Berlin wall, come on, open the border, you know, and this and this. That was President Reagan and he was the first president he called it by name, you know, he called the Communist, you know, devil, or whatever he said, yeah. So this together, you know, of course they study in Poland, you know. Then that Poland was more interested to the younger ge -- generation, you know, which is good to -- to know, these facts, yeah.

Q: What -- what about your own children and grandchildren? Are they -- to what dis -- to what degree are they interested in their own si -- Polish and Austrian, for that matter, background?

A: Yeah. To be honest with you, we not talk that much, you know, about this, you know. I -- I don't know, we never discussed this, really, you know. We talk more about, you know, what happened, what you doing, you know, and this and this, but we not go there. Once awhile we talk, you know, how nice was in Austria, and around holidays, you know, they got different style there for the holidays, you know, and also in Poland, you know, so we -- we talk the tradition a little bit, you know, but not too much. Maybe we should talk more about that.

Q: I guess I was just wondering whether they themselves had sort of the urge to read books about it, or to find out, or to -- to go themselves, or -- or not.

A: Yeah, well, not -- really, I don't know what to say, yeah, it's -- it doesn't come to that, yeah.

Q: Wh-When you look back, what kind of impact -- I mean this is a very difficult, complex [indecipherable] question, but maybe you can speak a little bit to it, when you look back, what kind of impact did your experience during the war have on you, for your life afterwards?

A: That -- I -- say again, I -- I didn't get you, I --

Q: What -- what -- what impact -- what -- what --

A: Impact was, yeah.

Q: -- effect, what -- what -- what effect did those experiences during the war have on you for your life afterwards?

A: Oh, like I said before, you know, that tells me, you know, that life can be [indecipherable] different, see? And that the life itself can be so miserable for many people, not only for me, for many people. And sometime, you know, I think why is it like that? Why -- why was it like that? What I did wrong, you know? Why those people suffered so much, you know? Is that my guilt because I am Polish, is that a guilt because I'm Jewish? We didn't do nothing wrong, just our nationality and that was a crime to them? You see, so you -- you think sometime, instead of world where we live today, you know, is a -- is a -- is a -- is a honest, or sometime, how should I say, dishonest.

Especially you know, it bothers me because those people was high ranking, you know, no matter what -- whether that was Communist system, or fa -- fascism, or -- or -- or -- or now, democratic system, they was then high and they still high. Nothing happened -- actually, nothing happened to them, you know? What happened to regular, average people, they suffered the most, yeah.

Q: Your own political sympathies, are they -- to which direction -- wh-what -- what are you, politically speaking, more sympathetic to which party? Are you more of a Democrat --

A: Independent, Independent, I just vote, and Frieda is more a open Democrat, you know, and I in position, you know, because I got the radio program and I got so many friends in both parties, you know? Even in Green party, see? So, I decided to stay Independent, but when it come to the votes, I look who runs for that office, you know, would I like that guy. I listen careful, you know, then I wait, you know, which one -- which -- which one is better, you know? Then I vote regardless whether he's Republican, Democrat, or Green. Yeah, I go by the person, see? Frieda goes strictly Democrat, you know, my wife, yeah. But also sometime, yeah, o-oh, gosh, he's a Republican, but he's a good man, yeah, maybe I should vote for him. I says, that's up to you, that's up to you. Yeah, so, again, thanks God we live here in this beautiful country, and lately now, you know, yesterday we find out that Governor Bush was elected the new president. We wish him very well. Too bad you got some winners, you got some losers. That was unusual, we're waiting 35 days after the election and finally we find out who is the president for us, and I -- I hope,

you know, he gonna do good and keep this country strong and democratic, you know -- I'm very, very proud, you know, to be citizens of this beautiful country, United States of America. God bless this country.

Q: Maybe -- I have maybe one more question for you. And maybe you'll have nothing to say, but is there any particular event that happened, a political event, or a social movement or anything, over the last 50 years here, that had a special impact, a special effect on you that was sort of important to you for some reason?

A: Well, when at that time, you know, what a -- what was it, 1962, when John Kennedy was shot, you know, the president, you know, that makes a big impact on me, you know. I-I think on all of us, see, because that shouldn't happen, you know. That was a big impact, you know, and I feel so sorry, you know, that happened. Otherwise, some other -- I no see anything special besides. I can't remember.

Q: Well, I have one more question after all. Do you have a busy social life? Do you see people, do you go out, are you busy in the community, apart from your work with the society, are you --

A: Oh yes, yes, we had so many meetings, by gosh, you know, almost every week meeting, you know. So in the evening I like to go for a meeting, you know, and discuss this, whatever they got in the program you know, and I'm pretty active. Which is good because you meet the people and you work for them, and they do good job, and -- and this is a free country, you know, and you can -- you can do -- so long, you know, you no do anything wrong, you know, against the government, you know. And this is good, I like

that part and this very interesting to me, and I want to keep myself busy, you know, I -- I like to do. Matter of fact, you know, after we finish this interview, we got a meeting at the Polish community club toda -- tonight, and we gonna elect a new officer, yeah. So we gonna vote, you know, that give me another privilege you know, to -- to select, you know, more officers, see? And is a pretty good organization. Actually this is a -- to Polish community club belongs about 28 organization, different organization are shareholder, and we are shareholder, too. And I on a board of directors, see? So, this is a very strong organization, we got the beautiful club. I was president once for three years, I remodeled that place inside, installed the air conditioner, and you know, new ceiling, new floor and new walls, and there's many, and by many occasion you got weddings and banquets, and we can handle about 300 people, and there's a beautiful -- this a old building, but inside is beautiful atmosphere, you know, remodel everything. Thanks to me, I should say. No, I overdo it. But I was the president, and that was my suggestion to remodel that place, because that was a old style, you know, and now the younger people, when they get married, you know, they want to go in a decent place, you know, have a wedding, you know, because they make a picture, you know, and this and this. So I thought that's a [indecipherable] time, you know, to remodel this place. No air conditioner, there was no air conditioner, oh, got to be. So I installed two air condition there. And it is a place where, you know, what -- that people can go. Not only Polish people, but also, you know, Americans, you know. And is -- I'm very proud I belong there, yeah.

Q: Well, on that positive note, let me thank you very much for giving the interview, for doing this. And --

A: You're welcome, you're welcome.

Q: And this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Julian Noga. This is tape number three, side B.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Julian Noga. This is an addition to the interview conducted on December 14th, 2000. Today is the 15th of December. Th-This is tape number one, side A. When I thought about the interview yesterday, I thought that maybe we can go over one more time about the various organizations that you are --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- have been working for, for the course of your life in America. Just to clarify a little bit, and maybe speak in a little bit more detail about them.

A: Okay.

Q: So the very first organization that you founded or joined was what and when?

A: That was a short after we ca -- we came to this country. There was many others -- s -- people come from Germany, Austria, Italy, England, so called displace -- displaced persons. And we thought that time that we need an organization, we should be organize. You know, work together, help each other, and so -- and so we or -- organize, I am the co-founder of White Eagle Association here in Utica, New York. And this is an organization, a charity organization like I said yesterday and exists already 50 years. We just celebrated 50 anniversary of founding that organization. And that organization is also a member of Polish American Congress.

Q: Let's -- let's talk about the White Eagle a little bit more. What kind of causes did you support, and how did you get money together to support them?

A: Well, you see, after the war -- oh -- oh, after the war was ended, there's -- there was so many widowers, so many invalids, you know, people unable to work. And we organize some doings, some banquets and shows, and collect some money, and we helped those people. And also we help some children, you know, the orphans. And -- and stick together, and -- and also w-work together to -- not to be lost in this big country, as it is, United States, see? And I think we did a good job, and I was president for 35 years in that organization, I'm very proud, and this is a very well known, fine organization -- charity organization.

Q: And that was a local -- that was a local effort here from -- from Utica?

A: Yes, local, but also we got delegates to the Polish American congress. Polish American congress is national-wide organization connected with the Polish American alliance organization, what is a -- a very big, more like a insurance organization. Matter of fact, we had insurance, many of us. We had insurance, life insurance, yeah, from th -- from this organization. And we got one president from both Polish American alliance, and Polish American congress. This is one president, a very fine man. I had a chance to talk to him. He was our honorable guest in White Eagle Association when we celebrate a year ago our 50 anniversary. Matter of fact, I was sitting next to him, and I show him my indentity card from American Holocaust, you know, United States Holocaust, and he was very interested. And then I had a interview with him after, and also I put on my radio program. That interview was very interesting. Now, Polish American congress have lobby in Washington, D.C., and Polish American congress was working hard so that --

that Poland become a mem -- member of NATO organization. And now still the Polish American congress work hard to help somehow, that the Poland be a member of United Europe, what is very important. And also, the Polish American congress had a -- a -- many people in different way financially as -- for the needy people, you know? And I understand that I am delegate there, I represent the Polish home [indecipherable] from Utica. I -- I am the delegate to the congress and our meetings usually we have in Schenectady, New York, Albany, New York, or even here in Utica, you know? We discussed many problems as Polish Americans, what is good for us, what is bad for us. Our meetings are very interesting, what we really work hard. So, because between us, Polish people from the past, from the second World War, there is some differences between our Polish -- Polish American people in between, and Jewish people. Now, s-so what we do, many times we invite Jewish rabbis, professors, and we try dialog, and smooth out some of those matters a-a-are not clear, you know, or some of those accusations sometime, they are not right, they are wrong. So we try and work together because Jewish people and Polish people go through the hell, through the second World War, and we should understand each other better, and -- and help each other, you know, in a many -- when you -- so-called political matters.

Q: So when you -- and so you do seminars where you invite Polish amer -- Polish people -- Polish Americans and Jewish Americans to -- to enter into a dialog about certain subject matters?

A: Yes, like we have meeting and we invite, like I said, the -- some rabbis, some je -- from the Jewish organization leaders, professors. In one of the meeting we had, oh, a few years back, I never forget that little bit -- was little bit touchy, I disagree little bit with that -- one of the speech, had one professor from Schenectady University, he was a young, Jewish professor, 35 years old, something like that. He make a questions, how come during the war the Polish people, they had to save more Jewish people? And that was a very touchy question. Then, also, that was that one survivor, I believe his name was Steve Stone, I believe, yeah. He was hiding by Christian family during the war, he was five years old. And he listened to this conversation and when everybody finished talk, then he get up and he says, Professor, you tell us that the Polish people should had more and saved more Jewish people. Did you ever was in Poland, did you ever know more about that situation what it was during the -- during the war? He says no. He says, you just -- how did you find out about that, and how -- how you are -- well, I think that's what I hear, that's what we talk, you know, and this and this. He says -- then he said, Professor, you know that the Poland was only country under the German occupation for helping the Jews, for saving the Jews, was death sentence for that. Oh, he didn't know what to say. He says, yeah but anyway, how come Holland save percentage-wise more Jewish people than Poland? Then this Steve, the Jewish fellow, he says, well, percentage, that was a different situation and there is a difference between Holland and Poland. See, in Poland that was -- before the war started, that was three and a half million Jewish people living. Okay, Poland is Christian country. The German know that. And the German expect that

the Polish people gonna help Jewish people. And that's why they set that law, for anything to do with the Jewish people, Polish Christian help Jewish people or hiding Jewish people, death sentence. And that was the -- the poster was all over the city, you know, in Polish and in German, you know, and that was clear, you know, what you're going to get. But even so, this Steve -- this is not my words, this Steve told that professor from Schenectady, New York, even so, the Polish people save about 100,000 Jewish people. Yeah. And different -- different ways, see, some churches, you know, help lots, you know. The nuns, and also there was like Professor Karski. Professor Karski, who knows how many indentity card he give to the Jewish people as a Christian. And those people survived. So I think that was a good answer to this. I'm sorry to say, you know, that the Jewish people maybe feel bitter against the Polish people, that the Polish people make -- didn't make enough, you know? But when you go to Israel, when you look at it, what's the name that place, you know, where that -- all names are, and they have -- had --

Q: Yad -- Yad Vashem?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yad Vashem, the memorial.

A: Yeah, that's right. You see so many Polish names, and so many trees was planted, you know, to honor those people, saved Jewish people, and I'm so glad -- I'm so glad that -- that so many, at least so many was saved. Even so, you risk your life, but you save. If you save only one life, this is good, you know, but they save quite -- quite a few thous -- a few thousand, hundred thousand like that Steve se -- did say. So this is -- this is -- I wish -

- I wish -- my wish is -- and I work hard, you know, and -- and I wish -- so this come true, that more understanding come in between Polish and Jewish people. We understand what they go through. They go through the hell, and we was the next, you -- we go through the hell. Maybe in -- not in so -- s -- same degree, you know, but we was not much better than Jewish people, you know that, when we give you interview about my wife, Frieda and myself. I come t -- we come to the concentration camp, for what? Because we love each other? Why Jewish people come in a concentration camp? Because they was Jewish, yeah. Was that crime? There was no crime. They didn't do nothing wrong. They was people like anybody else, see? And that bothers me. Now, how about Gypsy, Roman, let's say. They come, so many of them to the concentration camp, because they was Gypsy, because they was Roman, right? All met --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: All same with other religions, like how you say, people [indecipherable]

Q: Jehovah Witness? [indecipherable]

A: Jehovah Witnesses, right. Because they was Jehovah Witness, was that crime? Or how about homosexual? How many homosexual was there? They didn't do nothing wrong, you know, that wel -- that was for then -- even in this country now, this is a private matter, you know, between person and person, you know? And that -- that -- I no see any crime. So you see, when you -- when you go through this as a -- as a ex-concentration camp prisoner, I had so many Jewish friends. I eat with the same spoon, we help each other all we can. And when I hear such accusation now from the Jewish side, it hurts.

Because if you say that Polish people are anti-Semitic, that means I am anti-Semitic too. And I am not. I swear I am not, see, because I grow up with the Jewish people, I like Jewish people. They didn't do nothing wrong to me, and I have no reason to be against the Jewish people.

Q: D-Do you feel that sometimes it is also a question of Americans -- non-Jewish Americans maybe not having enough information to understand certain things? When -- when you told people that you were out o -- that you were in camp, for instance, did they immediately assume you were Jewish, or did they understand that --

A: Yeah, many people -- many -- many people told me -- many people told me -- we talk, well, for instance in that coffee shop we meet, you know, and so we have conversation. They say, ooh, what wa -- Julie, what was you doing during the war, where were you? Well, I was in Germany, yeah, I spent almost four years in a concentration camp. Oh gosh, four years in a concentration camp. Oh, Julie, I didn't know you are Jewish. Now, this is -- you know, make me -- sometime make me laugh, then sometime you know, it bothers me a little bit, see, because again, besides the Jewish people, there were so many other nationalities in a concentration camp and they suffered just the same, you know, like Jewish people.

Q: You -- you did -- you did tell your story once or twice in the -- in the newspaper. It was --

A: About three times, I think.

Q: About three times. And it was [indecipherable]

A: Here's the one of them hangs, you know, about three years ago for Valentine day, there was a -- on the front page -- page, there was that article, you see that -- my picture, I smile, Frieda, you know. They were --

Q: It shows -- it shows both of you arm in arm and --

A: Yeah --

Q: -- looking very sweet and --

A: -- but when you look at it above, you know, when we se -- gl -- right after we get married, you know, see our picture, you see how good looking we were at that time? Oh, Frieda was a beautiful girl, yeah.

Q: I want -- I want to --

A: And then -- and then we publicize, and we have so many response from people, you know, American -- even from younger generation, we was -- I was surprised that the younger generation was so interested. And you know, it is for the younger generation here in -- in this country, when you write story you was in a concentration camp, about, because you've fallen in love -- fallen in love with a Austrian or German lady. So the young generation says, and for that they sent you to the concentration camp? I says, not only that, they send me to the concentration camp, I -- in a way I was lucky they send me to the concentration camp, but I can be hanged for that. No, they -- they can't believe it, you know. For what, for love? Because you love someone you come to the concentration camp? I says yes. You say that time change, you know, and here in this country you can marry whoever you want, you know, regardless on the color skin, you know, on

background, you know, that doesn't matter. See, but that time, during the Hitler time, Hitler want to keep up the clean race, you know, German race, you know, no mix. But I no have to tell you what happened after the war, you know, there was a big mix.

Q: So that was sort of an example for comments from the younger generation. Did you receive -- give us a few more examples from -- maybe from the Polish community or from other people.

A: M-Many of them, many of them, some people sent us the article in case we need it and even the [indecipherable] lady, you know, she drop about 10 n-newspapers, you know. And there was a -- a -- a big reaction on this, and even the state senator, you know, once he -- he wrote me a -- a beautiful letter, and he says, Julie, I know you for a long time, I didn't know what you was going through. Oh, what a interesting story, so and so. And wa -- that response was very, very -- in general was very good, but als -- and we had some telephone call, yeah, oh congratulation, yes, yes, specially the last one, and what we had three years ago on Saint Valentine day, they even call me on the station that time and congratulate me. But also when I get home after the program, you know, I had a nasty telephone, I told you that. A guy call me, he says, hey, you was in a concentration camp, Mr. Noga. I says yes. Oh, and then you survive. I saw your picture in that paper, this morning's paper. You look good. You was probably the -- one of the collaborator with the Germans, right? You know how this [indecipherable]. I says, buddy, whoever you are, you are so wrong, and I got no words for you, good-bye. Then I hang up. You know? You got people -- all depends, you know that. People are very funny, some people. Right

away they accuse you for something. If I was collaborator with the Germans, you think I go United States Holocaust there in Washington and tell my story, and my name, I didn't change my name, my father and my brothers, you know, still were living -- was living here, you know? I put my name if I was doing something wrong? Absolutely not. And before they accept me in -- in United States Holocaust --

Q: Museum.

A: -- before they invite me, they check up my background. They know who I am, yeah. So, you see, here is -- so again, when I come to the Polish people and Jewish people, I wish we get some more dialogs, we get together, we smooth out some differences, you know. And be friends, you know, as we was before the war started, you know, I had so many friends, I still got so many friends there, Jewish friends, yeah. And again, nobody can take away anything from Jewish people, what they was going through, through the second World War. They had not much help. I wonder sometime how come American Jewish didn't help that time. When Professor Karski come and speak to the Roosevelt and tell him, Mr. President, in Warsaw, in Poland, the Jewish people are -- they are killed by Germans, they sent to the concentration camp. You know what the President Roosevelt did say at that time? Well, after the war is finish, we take care of those war criminals. And that was -- yeah. And that time he come -- Professor Karski come with a Jewish leader from the -- from Poland, from the Jewish underground. His name was, I believe Ziegenbalg -- Ziegenbalg, something like that. And they go to the English government, they go to the American government and nothing help that time, nothing

help. So the -- Ziegenbalg, he commit suicide. He open a -- I understand he open a gas in the kitchen, then he died, because he couldn't -- he couldn't do anything to help Jewish people, you know? And this is a tragedy, see, that -- that the whole world that time, no want to listen about this tragedy, what's happen to Jewish people, what they was doing in Poland, you know? And that bothers me, you see. And that -- this -- this what I can say, I wish, you know, we -- we smooth out those differences, if this exist any differences between Polish and Jewish people, so there's more understanding, you know, why, why and why, yeah.

Q: I would like to stop for just one second, and -- okay, so we -- I have one last question left, and -- and that has to do -- there is another organization that you have worked for, or that you actually founded, and that was the Kopernik Society, right?

A: Right, right.

Q: Yeah, when -- when -- when did that happen and -- and -- and why Kopernik? You -- what is the -- your interest there? Or what is your mission of that organization?

A: I was -- that time I was the president of Polish community club here in Utica, and under the -- my jurisdiction, there was 28 Polish organizations, see? So otherwise, each meeting I speak to delegates of 28 organization, see that Polonia in Utica. That time was very strong and still is strong. So, most of the -- those organization was like a insurance, like a ro -- mothers of rosaries, or Saint Anne Societies, and Saint Peter Societies, you know. But I was looking around and I was thinking, gosh, you know, we need a organization, you know, on a little bit higher -- higher level. Tell us about the culture,

Polish culture, American culture, you know? So that was a -- at that time, 1970 some -- yeah, that -- '73, I think. That was a -- a fi -- fifth anniversary -- 500 anniversary of Nicholas Kopernicus -- Nikolai Kopernik birthday. And then I called special meeting, the whole Polonia meeting, and it -- oh, about hundred people attend, presidents, you know, from different organization, you know, guests. And I introduce my plan, you know, we -- we need another organization. And because this is a 500 anniversary of Nicholas Kopernicus, Nikolai Kopernik birthday, maybe we should build up a statue, put the statue here in the city [indecipherable] to this -- make a mark, you know, to this, because who was Nikolai Kopernik? Nikolai Kopernik was the astronomer, and he was the first man find out that the -- not the sun but the earth turns around the sun, right? Yeah, and that -- that came long time til his book and theory was accepted, but finally was accepted, and by gosh, truth is, we can send a man on the moon, do you know, and this and this, you know, that [indecipherable]. And so the people agree to -- to do this, and wa -- coming back to Nicholas Kopernik -- Ko-Kopernicus, he is a universal man. And I think that -- that time I thought -- I thought that was worth [indecipherable] to build up the statue for him. And we did. I designed the pedestal, because I am stonecutter, of course, and the statue was made -- three and a half meter high, was made in Warsaw, in Poland. Bronze statue, made out of bronze. So we put it together, and -- that statue, with the pedestal base, is 21 feet tall and four inches, exactly. And then -- then we had unveiling. When the statue was ready we had unveiling and many, many people come. And the congressman make a -- a -- recorded it in Washington, D.C. in Congress, that such a thing happen in

Utica, New York. And that was a big -- big, big thing. So -- and the organization, Kopernik organization, right after that decided to give a -- help students in college, you know, give a grant, you know, give a scholarship. And that's what they do since that, up to today, you know, they do -- not big sc-scholarship, you -- like thousand dollars for three s -- for three students, each become thousand dollars -- get a thousand dollars, yeah. And that organization -- yes, the organization got the -- got the museum and they'll find work for this community.

Q: Well, thank you very much for clearing that up. I think it was a very interesting amendment to the other interview, so thank you very much Julian Noga, and this is the end of tape one, side A, of the addition to the actual interview. Thank you very much.

A: You're welcome. Thank you.

End of Tape Four, Side A

Conclusion of Interview