Survivor Name: Menachem Limor

Photo:

Film Links:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-vI_Tx87B0 (2002)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZiGpNNs2SE (1990-91)

Map Link:

http://bit.ly/1ruAz8Q

Windowshade:

Menachem Limor
Survivor:
Czestochowa Ghetto; HASAG Munitions Factory/Czestochowa Slave Labor Camp; Buchenwald Concentration Camp

Biography:

Nashville, Tennessee
Born: 1930 Czestochowa, Poland
Survivor: Czestochowa Ghetto; HASAG Munitions Factory/Czestochowa Slave Labor Camp; Buchenwald Concentration Camp

Quote:

“Hundreds of people were crammed into these cattle cars. No food or water...we could barely sit. We melted snow to drink,” recalls Menachem Limor, who was on the train for five days on his way to Buchenwald.

Read More:

Snow offered survival. Menachem ate it and drank it and piled it up to stand on so he would appear taller to the Nazis who wanted to get rid of children too young for slave labor. Menachem says of his childhood in Poland, “We were so close. I remember being very happy.” After the Germans invaded and shot his father, he says, “everything changed to the worst... the worst it would ever be.”

His family moved into the ghetto in 1942. When his mother and one brother were taken to the Treblinka death camp, Menachem, small enough to hide in a hole in the attic, stayed behind with his brother, Irvin. At a HASAG work camp, Menachem says they met a “very religious man. He tried to teach the children whatever he knew. He taught us how to stay alive.”

Two years later, on the way to Buchenwald, Menachem kept one piece of bread in his pocket for the trip. “Each night, I would eat one bite.” On April 11, 1945, Buchenwald inmates climbed onto barracks’ rooftops to watch American tanks pull in. “They were coming from both sides. It was amazing.” After liberation, Menachem was reunited with his brother Irvin. They have no family photographs. He still struggles to picture his mother: “I can't see her face in my mind. For me this is the most painful of all.”

Timeline – *Menachem Limor*

1930

June 10: Menachem Limor was born Moniek Lipszyc in Częstochowa, Poland. He was the youngest of three boys.

1938

At eight years old, Menachem went to a Jewish school named Weinstock.

1939

September 1: Germany invaded Poland. After hearing radio warnings, Menachem and his family attempted to avoid the fighting by fleeing to Przerow. The driver of the carriage tried to rob

them; he was killed by bombings in the area and the family escaped. The Limors stayed in Przerow for 10 days before making their way back to Czestochowa, Poland.

Arriving back home, they found their apartment had been vandalized and the city had been divided into two sections. The Jews were placed in the ghetto and were forced to wear the Star of David for identification.

September 3: Approximately 100-150 Jews were killed by the Germans. This massacre became known as Bloody Monday.

1940

Menachem's father was forced to work through a snowstorm, which destroyed his health. The Germans then shot him. Menachem's brother became the main caretaker of the family.

1942

The Czestochowa Ghetto was sealed.

Menachem and several other family members were hidden in the attic by Irvin, Menachem's older brother. Someone informed the soldiers of the hiding place. As a result, Menachem's mother and one brother were taken to Treblinka where they perished. After hiding in another location, Menachem eventually escaped; those who stayed in the building died when the German soldiers demolished the building.

At age 13, Menachem survived a selection when his brother, Irvin, convinced the German guards that he [Menachem] was old enough and young enough to work. He was sent to work at the HASAG-Pelcery Ammunition Factory. While there, he was often beaten by the guards because he was not strong enough to carry out his job, which was to beat the prisoners who arrived to work late.

1945

January: Menachem and other prisoners were transported to Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

April 11: Menachem and Buchenwald Concentration Camp were liberated by the US Army. He was later reunited with his brother.

1946

Menachem went with his wife and his brother, Irvin, to Israel.

1954

June 17: Menachem married his wife, Lea.

1966

Menachem Limor changed his name from Moniek Lipszyc to a Hebrew name.

1968

Menachem moved his family to Nashville, Tennessee to be with his brother.

Currently

Menachem Limor lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

Classroom Ideas

Critical Thinking/Discussion Questions – *Menachem Limor*

1. Read this quote: "Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe."

—Elie Wiesel, *Night*

Are there situations in the world today where human dignity is in jeopardy? What can one individual do to make a difference? Discuss.

2. How do Menachem's experiences in Czestochowa reflect the human dimension of the Nazi's decision to make the ghettos temporary through the techniques of severe overcrowding and deliberate starvation?

Writing Prompts – *Menachem Limor*

1. "Hundreds of people were crammed into these cattle cars. No food or water...we could barely sit. We melted snow to drink," recalls Menachem Limor, who was on the train for five days on his way to Buchenwald.

Write an essay that both summarizes and analyzes how this quote relates to the deliberate and systematic efforts of the Nazis to dehumanize their victims as reflected in his story. Cite strong and thorough evidence from the film to support your analysis.

2. Please watch the filmed testimony of Menachem Limor. Write an essay that compares and contrasts Menachem's experience in the ghetto with other survivor experiences in ghettos during the Holocaust. Be sure to cite strong and thorough evidence from both sources to support your argument.

Related Instructional Resources:

Webb, Chris, and Michal Chocholatý. *The Treblinka Death Camp: History, Biographies, Remembrance*. Stuttgart, Germany: Ibidem, 2014. Print.

Weinstock, Eugene. *Beyond the Last Path: A Buchenwald Survivor's Story*. New York: Boni & Gaer, 1947. Print.

Werber, Jack, and William B. Helmreich. *Saving Children: Diary of a Buchenwald Survivor and Rescuer*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1996. Print.

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Trans. Marion Wiesel. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, a Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006. Print.

Artifacts

Identification card of Menachem Limor indicating his status as a former inmate at Buchenwald from August 19, 1942, to April 11, 1945. Limor was forced to use different names during different situations while living in Europe before, during, and after the war. The name shown on the card is Mendel Lipszyc, but other names that Limor used included Moniek Lipszyc and Marian Lipschz. Limor states that he used “whatever was most convenient” according to the circumstances.

Identification card of Menachem Limor indicating his status as a former internee of Buchenwald. The card indicates his birthplace, Czestochowa, Poland, and the dates which he was a prisoner. This identification card shows his name as Marian Lipszyc. Menachem used different names for different situations, according to what was safer and more prudent.

Student pass issued to Menachem Limor when he was 14 or 15 years old. The pass indicates that he was a former concentration camp prisoner from Buchenwald.

Student pass issued to Menachem Limor affording him “every way privilege and help.”

Tags:

Survivor, Poland, Israel, Treblinka Extermination Camp, Buchenwald Concentration Camp, Czestochowa Ghetto, HASAG Munitions Factory/Czestochowa Slave Labor Camp, Bloody Monday/Czestochowa Massacre, Irvin Limor

Transcript (1991):

Menachem Limor (1991)

J34

1hr23m4s

Interviewer: This is Sunday, June 10th, 1990. This is James R. Siebold interviewing Menachem Limor. Mr. Limor, could please give me your full name?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, my full name is Menachem Limor. My former name was Moniek Lipszyc and I changed it to a Hebrew name while I was still living in Israel.

Interviewer: What year was that that you changed your name?

Menachem Limor: In 1966.

Interviewer: 1966. What is your date of birth?

Menachem Limor: I was born on November 1st, 1930.

Interviewer: Your place of birth?

Menachem Limor: Czestochowa, Poland.

Interviewer: Could you please spell Czestochowa for us?

Menachem Limor: Yes. C-Z-E-S-T-O-C-H-O-W-A.

Interviewer: The name of your spouse?

Menachem Limor: Lea.

Interviewer: The date and place of your marriage?

Menachem Limor: It was June 17, 1954.

Interviewer: You will have your anniversary soon.

Menachem Limor: That's right, coming up.

Interviewer: Your father's name please?

Menachem Limor: My father's name was Israel.

Interviewer: And his date and place of birth?

Menachem Limor: It was in 1898. He was born also in Poland Czestochowa.

Interviewer: And your father's occupation?

Menachem Limor: He was a shoe factory owner.

Interviewer: Your mother's maiden name?

Menachem Limor: Lewkowicz.

Interviewer: And could you spell that please?

Menachem Limor: L-E-W-K-O-W-I-C-Z

Interviewer: Thank you. The date and place of your mother's birth?

Menachem Limor: It was the year 1900 in Klobucko.

Interviewer: Could you spell that name please?

Menachem Limor: K-L-O-B-U-C-K-O.

Interviewer: You're very good with your spelling.

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: Your mother's occupation?

Menachem Limor: She was a housewife.

Interviewer: Could I please have the names of your children?

Menachem Limor: Yeah. I have a daughter Miri, she was born on October 21st, 1955 in Israel. A daughter Hagit, she was born on March 15, 1960 also in Israel, and a son Yoram who was born on April 21st, 1967 also in Israel.

Interviewer: Thank you. Menachem, the years before the war, you were located where?

Menachem Limor: Before the war, I was in Poland, Czestochowa, I was just a student in second or third grade.

Interviewer: I see. Your family, who all was living with you there before the war in Czestochowa?

Menachem Limor: My father, mother, and two other brothers. I have two more brothers.

Interviewer: What were the brothers' names?

Menachem Limor: One was Irvin. He is living now in United States. His name is Irvin but over there we'll call him Itzhak.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: And I had another brother Vovek, which, he was killed in the Holocaust.

Interviewer: In the Holocaust. Were you the oldest of the—

Menachem Limor: No, I was the youngest.

Interviewer: You were the youngest. Could you give us some idea of what the life for your family was like before the war?

Menachem Limor: Well, we had a very good life because my father was well-off and we didn't miss nothing…except, living even in Poland, you always felt that you are a Jew but because we were well-off, we didn't feel maybe as much as some other people.

Interviewer: But even well before the war, there was a sense of being different, separate as a Jew?

Menachem Limor: Oh yes, you are always singled out as a Jewish person.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Menachem Limor: I think with all Jews.

Interviewer: I see. You were born in 1930.

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Is that right? So in 1938, you had been eight years old.

Menachem Limor: That's right.

Interviewer: You were in school at that time.

Menachem Limor: That's right.

Interviewer: What kind of school were you in?

Menachem Limor: Well, this was…we had over there a Jewish school and I was going to school with a name, Weinstock school. That was the name of the principal and was a school mostly for Jewish kids.

Interviewer: Mostly for Jewish kids. Were you a good student?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. And you enjoyed school?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah. Your brothers, they were also in school at this time?

Menachem Limor: Yes, he was going to a gymnasium.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Menachem Limor: Equivalent of a high school here.

Interviewer: I see. And were there other kinds of activities that you might have been involved in? Youth movement kinds of things, Zionist kinds of things, or were you too young for that?

Menachem Limor: No, I was too young for that. My brother was involved a little bit.

Interviewer: What kind of things was he involved in?

Menachem Limor: Well, there was a movement called HashomerHatzair and he was a member of that movement which was talking also about going to Israel, to Palestine, then going to Israel and—

Interviewer: Is that right?

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: The name of that group was?

Menachem Limor: HashomerHatzair.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: HashomerHatzair which to translate would be the Young Guard.

Interviewer: Is that right, yes. And these were young people whose desire was to go to Israel?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: My goodness. Both of your parents were very religious Jews?

Menachem Limor: My mother was more religious than my father, but my father was attending the synagogue every holiday like Yom Kippur or so now, Passover, he was going to attending the…and I was going with him every holiday.

Interviewer: Every holiday? Do you remember at all when your life began to change leading up to the German invasion? Do you have any memories of that?

Menachem Limor: Well, my life changed at the beginning of the war which was September 1939 that we were running away from our town because there was a threat that there would be maybe some fighting in town so we were running out away from towns and to small villages just to run away from the war, from fighting.

Interviewer: What kind of fighting were you running from at that point?

Menachem Limor: The Germans were invading Poland.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: And therefore the Polish government told us to run away from cities because there will be some fighting. No, on the radio, they were telling people to run away from the cities, go to small places because there might be fighting in the resistance in cities.

Interviewer: And you were with your family at that time?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: And this was…oh, the whole town was told to flee? It wasn't just the Jewish population?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, they told everybody to flee because there would be fighting. This was on the radio, on the national radio.

Interviewer: Yes. Do you actually have memories of that time when you were running with your family?

Menachem Limor: Yes, because on the way, the German planes were shooting on convoys, there were people…you could see people, miles of people running away from cities and German planes came in, were shooting on the…this was the first time I saw actually a dead man that was killed over there.

Interviewer: Is that right? It must have been very frightening for an 8-year-old boy?

Menachem Limor: Oh yes, it was very frightening. We were hiding…each time the planes will come, we were leaving the roads, running into a forest that was nearby, hiding.

Interviewer: Where did you actually go to? Where were the people marching to?

Menachem Limor: To smaller villages.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Menachem Limor: To smaller places where maybe there won't be fighting. That's what the people believed.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: That maybe in a small place, there won't be that much resistance. There'd be more chances of survival.

Interviewer: Where did your family actually go at that time?

Menachem Limor: We went to a place that was called Przerow.

Interviewer: Przerow.

Menachem Limor: Przerow.

Interviewer: Can you spell that?

Menachem Limor: Przerow, I would spell it P-R-Z-E-R-O-W.

Interviewer: Okay.

Menachem Limor: It was a small village that my father knew someone in that village. He wanted to get to that place because he knew someone over there that…maybe we'll be able to stay for a while.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm. And did that in fact happen?

Menachem Limor: Yes, yes. We walked over there about a week or 10 days and after Poland was captured by the Germans, we returned to Czestochowa.

Interviewer: Then you could return. And what was life then like in Czestochova when you returned?

Menachem Limor: Well, shortly after that, the Germans then said that the Jewish people had to go with a band on the arm with the Magen David on it just to identify you as a…and it was…I can't remember, I think it was written on it, Jude there which means Jew in German and then…and you are already…you couldn't go…and then they make a place that was called a Jewish section and Aryan section and the Polish section. And people had to move to live in the Jewish section which later become also a ghetto, which you call, the big ghetto. This was in the big ghetto in Czestochowa.

Interviewer: So when you came back, there were three different sections in the town?

Menachem Limor: Two.

Interviewer: Two.

Menachem Limor: One was the Jewish section and the Polish section.

Interviewer: So when you returned to Czestochowa, you were not able to return to the home that you had left?

Menachem Limor: Actually, our house was in the Jewish section so we would return to our house.

Interviewer: It was. How else was it different then living in that section than before?

Menachem Limor: Well, you couldn't…no, my father, he had a shoe factory, you couldn't produce and you couldn't sell and you couldn't buy. Food was more scarce and then there were also…while we were not over there, the Germans also took some people that stayed over there. Mostly Jewish people and killed about, I don't know, quite a few.

Interviewer: They just took these people out?

Menachem Limor: Yes, and killed them. And it was on a Monday, it was called "Der Blutige Montag" which means the Bloody Monday.

Interviewer: Bloody Monday?

Menachem Limor: Yeah. And on that day, they killed maybe 100, 150 people.

Interviewer: Do you remember what date Bloody Monday was? Is that written…no?

Menachem Limor: I can't remem…I can find out. I have a book, I can find out.

Interviewer: That's okay.

Menachem Limor: But it was at least, again, it was in September.

Interviewer: In September.

Menachem Limor: Or October.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: Or late September or early October.

Interviewer: How did you personally find out about the death of these Jews?

Menachem Limor: Well, we knew about it and people were already always afraid. Even me, as a boy, when I saw a German walking the street, I—

Interviewer: You knew.

Menachem Limor: —tried to disappear so he won't see me.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Menachem Limor: Because I was frightened already and we knew that we have to be afraid of the Germans.

Interviewer: Were you frightened as a Polish citizen or frightened as a Jew?

Menachem Limor: Especially as a Jewish.

Interviewer: You knew that as a Jew?

Menachem Limor: Yeah because we were the…the Jewish people were the first ones that they tortured, killed, or made their life hard.

Interviewer: And as an eight-year-old boy, you already knew that fact?

Menachem Limor: Yes sir.

Interviewer: I see. How did it go from there? Now, you were back in your home but now this is a ghetto section …

Menachem Limor: The Jewish people started somehow to organize themselves. We started to deal with it. There were some people who were dealing with the Germans to fulfill their wishes, whatever orders they will give, we'll do just that they won't hurt us, that they will spare our life. And there were…they let us to live in their Jewish section, but we had to do…you had to make some money contributions to the German and to give them all kinds of things even from…they needed some furniture or clothes for the army, you had to give it to them. They were also probably busy with the war so they let us for a while. It quiet down a little bit and at that time, even the school that I was going to, started again to…we started studies but we started studies, we were starting, we had to study German in case that if the German will come in, that they will see that we are studying German language so maybe they won't be that mad. It wasn't legal but we are doing things like that. But still, everything was…you are always afraid—

Interviewer: That something was going to happen?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, something might happen and something bad might happen.

Interviewer: When you were talking about how certain personal property was taken away, how did that happen?

Menachem Limor: It wasn't taken away. You had to bring it out, whatever they wanted. And they…between the Jewish people, that was said, well, we have to supply them with that much of that article or that article or whatever.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: And that everyone had to contribute and give them.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: Otherwise, if you didn't fulfill that order, then they would come and they would take it by themselves and maybe kill some people also. In order to save lives, you were giving away property or whatever they would ask.

Interviewer: Was there actually some sort of Jewish government that you had …

Menachem Limor: They called it…not, it wasn't a government but it was like a Jewish committee.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: It was dealing with them. And like there even was…they made up a Jewish police.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: To make order which was…of course, they were doing everything that the Germans told them but it was…sometimes, the Germans told the Jewish, we need this and that and the Jewish…or to bring somebody. If they wanted to arrest somebody, they tell the Jewish police, then the Jewish police will bring him.

Interviewer: What was the feeling among the Jewish people about the ones who were acting as the police?

Menachem Limor: It was really…it wasn't a good feeling and really, at that time, they were talking about just collaborators with the Germans.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Menachem Limor: And some of them, they didn't do it willingly but in order to save their lives or their family lives, sometimes they did things like this too.

Interviewer: Yes. The amount of supplies for eating for example that you were able to get during that time, were people eating well, or was this more difficult?

Menachem Limor: No, it was more difficult, because it wasn't even rations or something like this but you could buy from the Pole…if you took chances, you could buy from the Polish people. There were Polish peasants that's selling food on Polish markets. You could buy food if you had money enough, but of course it was also in danger because if you got caught with…they could kill you for it.

Interviewer: They could kill you for having…

Menachem Limor: You could buy what was in the Jewish section but if you wanted…but in Jewish section, you couldn't produce.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: You couldn't produce food. You had to buy from some place. Once it was in the Jewish section, you could buy it but to bring it over from the other section to the Jewish section, this was the greatest danger and they were catching somebody, they easily could kill him for it.

Interviewer: Was the Jewish area at this time fenced in?

Menachem Limor: No.

Interviewer: Was there any physical boundary or—

Menachem Limor: No, at this time, it wasn't fenced.

Interviewer: Not yet?

Menachem Limor: No.

Interviewer: What was the attitude of the non-Jew in Poland towards the Jew at this time?

Menachem Limor: Well, most of them didn't care about it. I'm not…I won't tell, there was some that they tried to help us in any way they could, but most of them didn't care about it. They didn't care what's happening in our section. They went about their lives in their sections without caring about the Jews. And there were sometimes people that were pulled out of the Polish section in order to buy something or sell something or meet somebody and there were a lot of problems when they were recognized by Polish people as Jews, the Germans were told about them, they got caught, and they could get killed or beaten up.

Interviewer: The Poles in some ways were collaborating with the Germans in terms of keeping the Jews—

Menachem Limor: Yeah, it was…I would say, they both hated us. They both didn't like us. Some hated us more and maybe some less but the Poles didn't like us either.

Interviewer: What was the attitude among the Jewish population at this time? Were people frightened? Were people feeling—

Menachem Limor: Yes, we're frightened about…this was an experience that nobody ever went through. It was something very new, never happened. As much as people, as Jews suffered in Poland, it's not…it can't be compared to what was happening now.

Interviewer: No.

Menachem Limor: And really, people were astonished and didn't know at the beginning how to act. And it took time until you could understand. There were things that you heard about and you didn't believe that it happens.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you remember something of that kind?

Menachem Limor: Well, I remembered a letter. I remembered when they were talking about the death camps.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: Some Jewish people didn't believe it in the beginning.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: Even if they were told by Jewish people that, run away from those death camps but still, how was that possible? How can something like this happen?

Interviewer: How could that be?

Menachem Limor: That it never happened and then as long as you have the world, it will never happen and people didn't believe it in the beginning.

Interviewer: Did your father believe it, do you know?

Menachem Limor: My father, he died very early after the German occupation was…the first who went there, the German occupation, he was taken out, they came in, they needed to clean roads from snow and my father was taken out in his pajamas without shoes to clear snow from roads, and he got sick from then and he never fully recovered and he died.

Interviewer: That was in the first year of the occupation?

Menachem Limor: Yes, in 1940.

Interviewer: They came into your home? Physically came into your home and told them that he was going to be somebody—

Menachem Limor: Yes. Not told him, just took him.

Interviewer: Just took him. Do you remember them?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: What was it like for you?

Menachem Limor: Well, I was then nine years old and I just didn't understand what's happening. I didn't understand at that moment what's happening. I was just scared that they're taking my father away. I didn't know even where they are him away. They just took him. They didn't tell you we are pulling you for this or that...just, you come with us and that's it. And that it was scared and then when he came, he was sick all the time.

Interviewer: Was he able to get any medical care? Are we on?

Male: Yes.

Interviewer: This is James Siebold on June 10th, 1990 interviewing Menachem Limor. You were saying that after you came back to Czestochowa after leaving it for a short time, things were certainly different but still were not as tough as they were going to become.

Menachem Limor: That's right.

Interviewer: When did things begin to change for the worse?

Menachem Limor: Well, it was…in 1942, they decided to close up the Jewish section and put us in a ghetto which was already, there was barbed wire around and it was watched by Germans and Ukrainian soldiers.

Interviewer: Ukrainians?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: So there was roughly about a two to three-year period of time after the occupation but before what you're describing now?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, it was 1942.

Interviewer: I don't want to move too quickly into the new—

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: Are there other things to be said about your life or your family's life before 1942 that I haven't touched on yet?

Menachem Limor: Nothing special, only just that my brother, as a young boy, 18 years old, had to take care of our family. And we lived all the time in fear of not knowing what will happen, when something will happen. We had to go identify, as Jewish people, you had to have a band on your arm that showed that you are Jewish, you couldn't move freely out of the…you couldn't move out of that Jewish section at all. There was a few who were caught over there, they could kill you for it. And all the time, you know, it was, they just build in you a fear. Slowly, slowly, you are fearing more and fearing more and getting more and more afraid of them. You started to be…to sit at home or just not to show yourself, just to try to be invisible. So, if they don't see you, they won't do you nothing.

Interviewer: What did they do? How did they do that?

Menachem Limor: Well, they could do whatever they wanted. There was no law that will tell you what you can do and you can't do. If he wanted to…they could take a religious person and just…a rabbi or somebody and shave his beard or just make out fun of him. Whatever they felt like doing.

Interviewer: Did you ever see that happen?

Menachem Limor: Yes, I saw they shaved some…I didn't know if it's a rabbi or just a very orthodox Jew with a beard and they cut off his beard and made fun out of him, threw him on the ground, beat him, and I…for no reason at all, just for him being Jewish and maybe they didn't like his looks, I don't know.

Interviewer: It was just random kinds of violence and there was no law to protect anyone?

Menachem Limor: No, no law to protect nobody. As a Jew, you didn't have no rights at all.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm. Before the war in Poland, even though discriminated against, there were laws that you as even a Jew could depend on that would protect you?

Menachem Limor: Well, there were laws and sometimes they protected you, I cannot tell always because you had…even in Poland, we had sometimes pogroms that they call, you know, that they were killing Jewish people. But, it was still…if you had at least a good lawyer, or if you had influence with money, then you could have some rights, buy yourself some rights. But here, you couldn't even buy some rights because just being Jewish, you were a person with no rights. You were not a person. I couldn't call you a person because you were a nobody.

Interviewer: Did the Polish Jew have any sense of what the threat from the Germans really was to themselves? Now, I'm talking now prior to 1939, I'm backing up a little bit.

Menachem Limor: Well, that's really for me, hard to say because I as a young boy, I didn't think about things like this or didn't talk about things like this.

Interviewer: So you don't know?

Menachem Limor: I don't think that anybody could think that things like this will happen.

Interviewer: Not of this nature?

Menachem Limor: I know, as I told you, my father, we were a well-off family and if my father would think that there really is some danger, it would be all of the Jewish people, we would go some place. I don't know, United states or to Palestine or to another country, I don't know where, but I'm sure that my father, he was able, financially, he was able to take us anywhere and if he didn't do it, then I'm sure that he didn't—

Interviewer: He didn't see that—

Menachem Limor: He didn't see it coming.

Interviewer: So in 1942, do you remember the day when…was it a day when things actually changed?

Menachem Limor: Well, they just brought…there was a certain Ukrainian soldier that were…they were…we knew that they are liquidating ghettos and killing Jewish people and we saw them coming. They came to Czestochowa and they surrounded the Jewish section and then they started street by street to take out the people and then the young people, they were taking to work, youngsters and healthy people, they were taking to work. Older people, children, and women mostly, they were taking away and shipping them to Treblinka. This is what we found out later that they were shipped to Treblinka. Our street was the last one actually to be…that they would come to take, and it was actually, our street was in front of a square that…on that square, you could see, they making those selections. Who was going, those people are going to work, and those people are shipped away to Treblinka and we could see it from the balcony, through a window, you could see those things happening. I myself, my mother and my brother, and me and some other…we made some kind of hiding places to hide and not to go out because we knew that as youngsters like in my age, I won't be taken to work, I will probably be taken away, to be shipped away.

Interviewer: You were too young?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, I was too young, so we were hiding. I was hiding in one place, my mother and brother, they were hiding in another place.

Interviewer: Let me ask you, before you go on, can you describe what the selection looked like?

Menachem Limor: Well, I myself didn't look through the window because as a youngster, they wouldn't let me but I know that…just people were coming…they were coming into a house and starting to scream, "Judenrause," means Jews outside, all the Jews outside. And then they were pushing them, pushing them toward that square, at that square, you had to pass through German people who were saying, you go left, you go right, you go left, you go right, and that's how it was. The younger people were sent to…were collected into places, in an old factory which was called metalurgia, they were all brought over there, from over there, they were supposed to be taken to work.

Interviewer: Where was that work to be?

Menachem Limor: We didn't know that yet. We didn't know yet then. But after the…they went like this street after street. After they finished with all the Jewish section, they moved all those people into a smaller ghetto, which I told you, a small ghetto which was…it was barbed wire around and from over there, people were going to work to all kind of places wherever the German needed them. It was on the railroad tracks, whatever was needed.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: I myself didn't go to work and I was always in hiding because we were afraid about it. As I told you, I was hiding in one place and my mother and brother were hiding in another place and somebody informed Germans about that hiding place where my mother and brother were too. And my brother and brother and some other people were taken away and also shipped out to Treblinka.

Interviewer: How was it found out where they were?

Menachem Limor: Somebody informed the Germans about that hiding place.

Interviewer: You don't know who that was?

Menachem Limor: We know and I know that that person was also…he was Jewish and he himself was also taken away. With the same transport that my mother and brother were shipped away, he was also shipped away. He thought maybe he will save his life if he will inform the Germans about it. So he was also taken away and I never saw my mother and brother from then on.

Interviewer: That was the last time you saw them?

Menachem Limor: Yeah. I myself was hiding in another place and I…my brother helped me later to get also to that smaller ghetto from that hiding place and I started to hide in that smaller ghetto.

Interviewer: When you were in hiding, how was it decided that you would go one place and your mother and brother would go another place? What was that like?

Menachem Limor: Well, actually, I was…it is a long story but I would tell you, in the beginning, I was together with my mother and brother.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Menachem Limor: One of my uncles that worked for Germans, he got permission from the Germans to take out his wife and two kids but one of his kids was taken…he took with him before so he took him out already from that hiding, then he came to take out his wife and two kids so I was like the second kid. He took me as his second kid.

Interviewer: Take you out of the ghetto entirely?

Menachem Limor: Out of that hiding place to another place where—

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: —that was safer at that time.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: That's how I survived. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here sitting before you and talking to you either. And then, this was my uncle and that uncle, he doesn't, he didn't survive it. His two kids didn't survive it either. I miracle-y…I don't know how to explain, I did survive, I survived it miracle-y.

Interviewer: And your first hiding place, where was that? Where did you go the first time?

Menachem Limor: The first hiding place was on an attic which was closed down. This was closed down, there was a small opening. If someone didn't know that there are people, he wouldn't pay attention to it but once they were informed, the Germans, they found the place.

Interviewer: Were you alone at that point?

Menachem Limor: No, at that point, I was still with my mother.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: But maybe it's interesting that I would tell you the…because I told you about my uncle and his two kids which were younger than me actually. They were younger than me. We were hiding in that small ghetto and we

were hiding also over there also in a place where there were, I don't know, maybe 20 people altogether were hiding in that place and the Germans found that place. And there was a small opening…you had to crawl into that hiding place through a small opening. And the Germans, they were too lazy to go in so they just opened that opening and said everybody out. All the people started to go out. I was over there with those two, my two cousins, I was over there and I was trying to be the last one to go out. And whenever I went out, I didn't go out, I put my hands on the mouth of the two children that were smaller than me and I was quiet and we didn't move out. With a flashlight, through that opening, they put in the flashlight to look and they said, is everybody out, somebody still here? We didn't answer and they moved away and just the three of us survived at that time. All the others were taken away and shipped away and didn't survive. So this was really…I don't know how it came to my mind to do it but if I wouldn't do it, I would be gone with all the other people too.

Interviewer: You were nine years old?

Menachem Limor: No, then I was older, 12, 13.

Interviewer: 12 years old? And how old were your cousins?

Menachem Limor: One was about 10 and one about 6.

Interviewer: And somehow, you had the presence of mind to—

Menachem Limor: Yeah, to do it. I don't know, it's not from experience. I did do it just maybe from, just from fear or—

Interviewer: Fear.

Menachem Limor: Instinct to survive, I don't know how to call it but that's what I did and at that time, it worked.

Interviewer: How long did you stay then in that spot, in that hiding spot?

Menachem Limor: I was in that ghetto for…we were hiding on and off…because actually, we were hiding, you know, when we knew the Germans…when Germans were coming, we were running into the hiding. When Germans were not there, we were more free but it was for about a year.

Interviewer: For about a year and anytime a German came, you would have to go back into hiding.

Menachem Limor: That's right, hiding.

Interviewer: This was in the small ghetto?

Menachem Limor: In that small ghetto.

Interviewer: How many people were in the small ghetto?

Menachem Limor: I cannot tell you…I would say probably about 8,000.

Interviewer: 8,000.

Menachem Limor: 8,000, 10,000.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: I can't give you the exact figure but I would say something—

Interviewer: What was life like in the small ghetto at that time? Now, this was a fenced-in area?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, it was fenced-in but people were going out actually. In the morning, people were going out to work.

Interviewer: They would leave the ghetto area?

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: Go through the fence in order to the work?

Menachem Limor: No, they were…they had to…everyone had his place of work and they were going out…marching out in groups which were…Germans were watching them but they walked out from the ghetto to the workplace and then at the evening, they were returning there. And there were some that were married people and if their wives didn't work, they were staying also in the ghetto. But they had to go to work every day, to march out.

Interviewer: What would you do during the day when they left you in the camp?

Menachem Limor: Well, we were a few kids so we were playing around like kids did and watching…really watching…the older ones were watching on the younger ones. If you saw, if you heard or saw the Germans were coming, we had some ways of giving signs one to another just to disappear, to hide. That's what we were doing. Really, it was a waste of people. Youngster my age would then study at school so we were studying to survive.

Interviewer: Studying survival? Who took care of you? Who fed you?

Menachem Limor: Well my brother, he was going…every day, he was going out to work. My uncle, he was going every day out to work. If they were coming back, they will bring some food, whatever they got over there, it isn't they

bought it from some Polish people because it was…they were working in the Polish section or in the German section so they were in touch somehow with people outside. If they could buy from them some food, they would bring it. It was also very dangerous because sometimes when they were coming back, they were searched. If somebody was found that he is bringing in something, then his end wasn't good.

Interviewer: What would happen?

Menachem Limor: He could be either beaten up or killed, whatever they wanted. It depended on the feeling of the…at that certain time, what the German wanted to do. He could do anything he wanted. He could beat him up, he could kill him, he could…whatever he wanted.

Interviewer: These were all now German soldiers who were the guards for the ghetto, not the Ukrainians anymore?

Menachem Limor: There were some…the Germans, they were in charge, they were the commanders, let's say. The Ukrainian soldiers, they were, I would say they would be the private and then the German, he was the officer.

Interviewer: What was your attitude about the Germans and the Ukrainians at this time as a young man?

Menachem Limor: Well, we hated them and were just afraid of them. But of course, we knew this was taught from the first time, I have to watch out, if I see a German and later a Ukrainian, I have to, just to disappear, not to be in his way.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Menachem Limor: This was the safest thing.

Interviewer: Did you have any personal encounters either in the large ghetto or in the small ghetto with the German troops or the Ukrainian troops?

Menachem Limor: Well, I didn't have, except when I was hiding and I told you then when I was hiding in that…I was just trying not to be there. I had later, in the…that small ghetto was also…existed probably about a year or something like this and then they took…again made a selection and took people to work in an ammunition factory in the same town. There was an ammunition factory and they took them to work over there and to live over there. The ghetto was also destroyed completely. They put dynamite in all the houses and just destroyed the whole ghetto.

Interviewer: So this was now a third move?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: And this is even a smaller group now?

Menachem Limor: That's right, again smaller. Again, there was a selection and that selection, at that selection, I was…I had also hiding because actually, I was…at that selection, you had to go out and stay in kind of a square like this in rows and then go to Germans and they were taking out some people. They were taking out to work and some they were taking out to a truck and we saw that they loaded them on a truck and took them away.

Interviewer: You knew that? You saw that that truck—

Menachem Limor: We saw the truck…and then I was taken out also. I was taken out together with some other youngsters. My brother was with me and he wanted…he said, he wanted to go with me and the German didn't let him go with me.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: Because he told him no, you are going to work, to my brother. And he just pushed him away and I stayed over there on the side, me and some more youngsters. We were lucky that the man in charge of the ammunition factory, the director of the ammunition factory was German, he had…later we found out, he had some children our age and he went with that first truck that I told you, that they took away people.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: He went with that first truck and that first truck was brought over into the Jewish cemetery and the people from [unintelligible 0:40:57.2] were shot down. They just killed them.

Interviewer: Right outside the town?

Menachem Limor: In the cemetery, in the Jewish cemetery which was outside the town. And then, the director of that factory, he saw, he came back and he saw here another group of youngsters that he knew what will happen to them.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: And he went to that German officer that was in charge of that selection and talked to him and then he came together with him, asked us if we will work in his factory. We said yes, we will work. They took us back to the group where my brother went already to work because it's probably that German director, he had to have some pity on us all. He knew that he have kids the same age and he saw how all those were just shot down in cold blood for no reason, and probably from pity, what he just came and said that he will take us to work. Because if he wouldn't do it, I would be just in the second truck and taken over there and shot down.

Interviewer: Did you know that at…all right. This is Jim Siebolt; it is June 10th, 1990, I'm interviewing Menachem Limor. You were mentioning, Menachem,

that you were at one point selected to be in a group of children that were not allowed to work, they were put aside and that you were later allowed to work. When you were selected out to not work, to stand with these other children, did you know what that meant?

Menachem Limor: We didn't know for sure. We knew that it doesn't mean nothing, good for nothing.

Interviewer: Not good.

Menachem Limor: And we saw we will probably be sent out with the train like other people who were before us sent to Treblinka or to places like that, but I didn't know that they were taken…that the first truck was taken out to the Jewish cemetery and the people…the kids were shot down.

Interviewer: Not at that time, you did not know that at the time?

Menachem Limor: No, we found out about it later.

Interviewer: Later. How much, at this time, did you know about what was happening at Treblinka and Buchenwald and Auschwitz? Was there any knowledge at all?

Menachem Limor: Well, there were…you heard rumors about it but you know, you heard rumors about it but really, people didn't want to believe in it. Maybe it's kind of a self-defense that you don't want to believe something bad will happen to you, and you are just thinking, ah, it's impossible. A lot of people didn't believe it. There were people, they were saying, you know, there were some youngsters, they said, "Maybe we need to make a kind of resistance, somehow to resist. If we are going to get killed anyhow, why shouldn't we resist?" And most of the older people say, "You are just talking nonsense because it's impossible that things like this will happen." And there were people that believed in it but most of…there were people that didn't believe that something like this is happening.

Interviewer: Were there actually formed resistance groups in your—

Menachem Limor: Yes, there were.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about that?

Menachem Limor: There were…and actually, at the day that I told you before, at the day when I was hiding with those two kids and they found also the hiding place where I was and I didn't go out from that hiding place.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: At that same day, they came to fight the resistance group and they killed…one of those people tried to kill a German and his gun didn't work. He got killed and together with him, about 25 people got killed in place right away, just for this that he tried to kill a German. So, there were resistance. You couldn't resist actually because actually, what we had…you could fight with your bare hands against guns which you can't resist too much.

Interviewer: No.

Menachem Limor: But there were people that worked on it.

Interviewer: No.

Menachem Limor: And too hard to organize it.

Interviewer: When you were in hiding in the small ghetto and then you mentioned that you were taken out for the selection, they must have found you. That was—

Menachem Limor: No, they didn't find me, just…you see, my brother, they started in the morning. All the groups that I told you that were going to work, didn't go out to work. They didn't let them go out to work and I went out together with my brother and my uncle. The other two kids and his wife, which was still alive then, stayed in the ghetto because this was…they thought that maybe I was already older, maybe I will survive somehow. And really, as long as I was standing in the line, and we are standing, you know, where the…first, before we come out, we had to stand in rows of five. I was always trying to stand the last one. And with my shoes, I was always making up, from the dirt, a hill that I will stand on the hill so that I will look taller. And as long as I was over there, I was all right but then when we had to march before the German, then they thought that I was smaller and I was taken out. But the—

Interviewer: So, it was thought you might have been able to pass.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, I had a chance and they knew…there were talks, rumors, I don't know how rumors come about, but there were rumors that we won't return to that ghetto; we will be taken out and they will liquidate again.

Interviewer: You knew that was going to happen?

Menachem Limor: We didn't know but we suspect that also because I had told you, those special Ukrainian troops that were coming were over there and those Ukrainian troops, this was a sign of liquidating ghettos.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: That's what we have and that's what we were afraid of.

Interviewer: I see.

Menachem Limor: So I went out also, then, I wasn't found then. As I told you, those two other cousins and my uncle's wife, that she stayed in the ghetto, they were killed over there where they exploded altogether. They exploded

all the buildings and they didn't…they stayed in hiding over there but they got killed because they exploded all the buildings. We didn't know that they will do this either but that's what they did.

Interviewer: Did it feel to you at that time that every day was a life and death matter as a young man?

Menachem Limor: Yes, you will never know what will happen the next day.

Interviewer: And even at that age, you were feeling that your life was at jeopardy at all the time?

Menachem Limor: That's right. Every day was…as I'm telling you, I was…later in that factory that we were taken, that ammunition factory, I was working over there, and then when we saw Germans, I tried to work always…first of all, you had to be busy, that they won't see that you don't work because otherwise, you could be taken away right away. And I always try, when I saw a German, I tried…if I work here, if I could work in another…to move, to do something else in the place that he won't see me. If it was under a machine or behind a machine or just…I was doing it because not to be seen was the safest thing for me at least as a youngster.

Interviewer: You were working in an ammunition plant then.

Menachem Limor: Right.

Interviewer: What kind of ammunition plant was that?

Menachem Limor: They were making over there bullets for…rifle bullets.

Interviewer: This was still in Czestochowa?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Is that right? This is a plant that had been built by the Germans for this purpose?

Menachem Limor: Yes, yes, and then it was called HASAG-Pelcery.

Interviewer: HASAG...?

Menachem Limor: – Pelcery, that's what it was called. It was a German…some German ammunition component. They brought machines and they were making some type of ammunition.

Interviewer: And then in…you were living then where?

Menachem Limor: In the place, in that factory, we'll build some wooden shacks.

Interviewer: Right in the plant, yeah.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, and we were working over there 12 hours…two shifts. One shift was working 12 hours at daytime and the other shift were working 12 hours at night time.

Interviewer: Would you remain, were there other Jewish workgroups other than yours?

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: They were doing similar things?

Menachem Limor: No, there were…in all that factory, I told you that there were…I don't know how many, maybe a thousand or…

Interviewer: A thousand?

Menachem Limor: Maybe. In that factory, we were about…between a thousand and two thousand people were living in those wooden shacks. There were other factories. They took a part of the people to another factory also. I don't know, I don't remember even exactly what those factories were manufacturing but there were about three places in Czestochowa but our place at HASAG-Pelcery was the biggest one. The two other were a bit smaller.

Interviewer: And you think you think you had…was it a thousand, you said, that you felt?

Menachem Limor: I think about…maybe a couple of thousand, I really don't know.

Interviewer: Do you have any idea, Menachem, what the Jewish population of Czestochowa was before the war?

Menachem Limor: No, I really don't know.

Interviewer: You don't know, okay. Because it seems like it's getting whittled down at each time.

Menachem Limor: No, you see, to Czestochowa and to that factory, were brought people from other towns too. There were towns that the people didn't…my brother's wife, she was from Lodz which is another town. She was brought from Lodz to Czestochowa to work in that factory. So, there were people from all over Poland that were brought over to work over there. There were people that ran away from towns and came to Czestochowa. They wanted to work because they thought, well, they were working, they were surviving.

Interviewer: They survive.

Menachem Limor: So, it was a place that people were either brought or got, some…in some way just to try to survive by working.

Interviewer: This will be a strange question, was there any social life at all among the Jews at this point?

Menachem Limor: There was…you had over there some people that we know they were husband and wives…

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: And there were a few small children that were always in hiding, somehow, miracle…I don't know even all the ways how they got over there but they were always in hiding. But there was nothing and we didn't have no…no books, no newspaper, no nothing. You are just…you didn't have time even [unintelligible 0:51:35.7] because at the morning you went to work and you were at work all the time and you worked all the time. And then when you came, you are so tired that you just laid down and fell asleep, if you could fall asleep because there were that many bugs around that some people couldn't sleep even.

Interviewer: Sometimes, that at the age you were at, that's the time when boys and girls begin to become interested in each other, was there any of that going on at all?

Menachem Limor: No, no, no. First of all, we were really few at my age. I don't know if there were about maybe 40 because we didn't survive too many of those. Most of the people were people able to work, young people from 35 or something like this. But for my age, we were very few, maybe 40. And also, everyone was always busy with work. You didn't have time to go out and to walk around or to date somebody. You couldn't do that.

Interviewer: How long did this period last for you in the ammunition plant?

Menachem Limor: This was about a year and a half. It lasted until January ’45.

Interviewer: January ’45?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Now we’re very late in the war.

Menachem Limor: Yes, until January ’45.

Interviewer: What happened in January ’45?

Menachem Limor: January ’45, I was…it was a Monday that we changed…or a Sunday or a Monday, I don’t remember, that we changed from dayshift to nightshift. So I was a nightshift and I was sleeping in that wooden shack and suddenly the Germans came and woke up everybody, took us out…

Interviewer: Everybody?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, everybody and all the nightshift, they took and put us into cattle cars in the train and we were taken away to Buchenwald and—

Interviewer: This was totally unexpected?

Menachem Limor: No, we didn’t know about it, suddenly, suddenly.

Interviewer: You’ve been there for a year.

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: Doing productive work and you felt that…before you go on, let me ask you this question, was there a sense of what was happening in the war? Did you know that 1945 in fact, the Russians and the Americans were beginning to move in?

Menachem Limor: Well, we didn't have radios.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: We didn't have…no, you heard rumors. Some…there were some Polish people working also in that factory, that ammunition factory, they were telling all kind of things. But for sure, we didn't know, we didn't know and this was really unexpected when January 15…it was January 15 and I think January 16, the Russians marched into Czestochowa. It was just a day before the Russians marched into our town, we were shipped out to…

Interviewer: You were woken up in the middle of the night…

Menachem Limor: No, it was in the morning. It was morning and woke up, I still remember, I had over there one of my cousins, she was a woman and she saw that I am about to be taken away, she had that piece of bread, she gave me a piece of bread and I put that piece of bread in my pocket and on the way to Buchenwald, we were about…it's about a week, we were about a week and closed in that cattle car that…they closed the door, they didn't open until we got to Buchenwald.

Interviewer: How long of a time was it?

Menachem Limor: It was about a week.

Interviewer: About a week.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, about a week and I had that piece of bread in my pocket so at night, when nobody saw it, I was breaking up a piece of that bread and eating it.

Interviewer: Eating it.

Menachem Limor: That was all the food I had for that week.

Interviewer: Was there other food that was given to you during that time?

Menachem Limor: No, we didn't get no food, no nothing.

Interviewer: For a week?

Menachem Limor: For a week.

Interviewer: And you were not allowed out of the train car?

Menachem Limor: No. There were people that died in the car who were laying with us.

Interviewer: Yes. What did you think during this time? What did you feel during this time?

Menachem Limor: Well, everyone, we didn't know where we are taken, for what reason. We saw…we knew that there was a lot of…it took…our train was stopped….each time that a German…that a train with German soldier was passing by, of course they stopped our train so we saw a lot of German soldiers and trains also going by, we didn't know what's happening but we saw…according to…you could see through the window some in places,

written down towns so we knew that we are going into Germany. This we know that we are taken from Poland to Germany but for what…what will happen to us, we didn't know until we arrived at the Buchenwald.

Interviewer: What was it like to arrive at Buchenwald?

Menachem Limor: Well, we arrived at Buchenwald, we were taken and it was very cold, it was winter and Buchenwald is in Germany, in the mountains. It was very cold and snow and then we were taken out from the train and brought into a place where we had to undress completely. They took away all our clothes, then we went to a shower, after the shower, they gave us different clothes. I myself got a clothes…I had the clothes, I didn't have…it was like an undershirt. It was completely open here. On my front it was open, and then undershirt and a jacket, and a pair of pants with shoes with wooden soles. And then we just heard that we came to Buchenwald. We didn't know…I didn't know that Buchenwald…I didn't know that a place like this existed.

Interviewer: Was there any thought in your mind that you might be put to death soon?

Menachem Limor: Well, the people over there told us no, that we were supposed…actually, we were supposed to be over there and shipped from Buchenwald to another ammunition factory in Italy but the war progressed so fast that the troops, the American troops, the Allied troops were so fast that they didn't have time to take us out over there. And people in Buchenwald told us no, that usually…that we will probably be sent to that ammunition factory.

Interviewer: And you were actually in Buchenwald just a very short time before liberation.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, about four months, three months, four months.

Interviewer: Three months…

Menachem Limor: I came over there January and it was liberated by the American army, April 11.

Interviewer: Did you anticipate the liberation coming during those last weeks or did it just happen one day?

Menachem Limor: No, we knew that something is happening because they started after… wherever they were they started to take out people from Buchenwald by foot. They were just marching them out and they didn't have all the trucks, they didn't have trains, so just marching them out by foot and I know one of my friends, he walked from there until Czechoslovakia they walked, until Theresienstadt. He ended up in Theresienstadt.

Interviewer: How far of a distance is that?

Menachem Limor: I don't know exactly but it's pretty far.

Interviewer: Pretty far.

Menachem Limor: It's pretty far, and a lot of people just died marching or just fell down from…

Interviewer: These were people being taken out of Buchenwald?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: And being just marched out?

Menachem Limor: Just marched out.

Interviewer: And no destination known as they're being marched out?

Menachem Limor: Nobody knew, just marched out and whoever couldn't walk, he got shot or died by himself or just from exhaustion. And my uncle…

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: Did I told you? He was also in Buchenwald and he was marched out.

Interviewer: These were selections that would occur to determine who would march out?

Menachem Limor: No, first of all, they took the Jewish people, whoever was Jewish. I myself wasn't marched out that time because I got sick in Buchenwald and I was in a hospital.

Interviewer: You had a hospital there?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, it was in Germany, it was a German camp. Germans are very efficient people and they have their rules. There was a hospital. It doesn't matter what kind of hospital but there was a hospital.

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: And I was in that hospital and that's why I wasn't marched out then. And my uncle, he got marched out, a lot of my friends and they are people that came together with me…

Interviewer: What happened to your uncle?

Menachem Limor: Once he marched out, I never heard of him.

Interviewer: And to this day, you don't have any idea of what happened?

Menachem Limor: No. He either died on the march or killed or died or…no way to tell you what happened to him.

Interviewer: Do you have any idea what happened to your cousins?

Menachem Limor: My cousins, I told you, they were…they stayed with their mother in that small ghetto…

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: And when they exploded all the buildings, they were killed over there that time.

Interviewer: What was the actual liberation like? What happened?

Menachem Limor: Well, this was really a day that…we woke up in the morning and we saw that there were no Germans in the watchtowers. Nobody was watching out and we knew it. We didn't see Germans, we didn't see all the people so we climbed up on the roofs of those barracks that we are living in and we saw from both side of Buchenwald, American tanks coming from both side of Buchenwald circling Buchenwald and then a jeep with American soldiers came into Buchenwald. It was a joyful day that we'll never forget. I have here even…I have here the release from Buchenwald, it was actually my first identification as a human being. No birth certificate, no passport, no ID, nothing. Who am I? So this was actually my first identification. All I was was a number which was 114980.

Interviewer: Who issued this document?

Menachem Limor: This issued…the American army gave us this. It's a stamp of the American army.

Interviewer: And your name as printed on this form was…

Menachem Limor: My name was Lipszyc. I changed my name to Limor later in Israel but my name was Lipszyc.

Interviewer: You also had some other documents that you received at the same time, is that right?

Menachem Limor: Not at the same time, a little bit late—

Interviewer: Are there other things that you can—

Female: You didn't really specify that you went every summer to…

Menachem Limor: Okay, we were well off, it doesn't matter--

Interviewer: Okay.

Menachem Limor: Well, that's not the reason. We didn't—

Interviewer: Yes, I'll come back…so, this is Jim Siebold it is June 10th, 1990, I'm interviewing Menachem Limor. Menachem, you were going to show us another document that you received after the war.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, well, this was a document which…I was in Buchenwald, I was over there as a—

Interviewer: Could you turn it up please?

Menachem Limor: I was over there as a political prisoner and this is a document which was issued by people that were jailed in concentration camps as political prisoners. I, as a 14-year-old boy, it's hard to think that I was really a political prisoner. This can show you, no matter what your age was—

Interviewer: How did that—

Menachem Limor: What?

Interviewer: How did that happen that you were identified as a political prisoner?

Menachem Limor: Because Buchenwald was actually a camp that most of the political prisoners were put over there. Hitler started that camp and I think in 1934 or '35 and the first prisoners over there were Germans which were political prisoners which were Germans that were against. So this was one of those…I was called a political prisoner.

Interviewer: And you also had another document, I believe.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, this is another document which…this was issued already by English army which showed that we are former concentration camp prisoners and to help us in every possible way because we are people…we didn't have no money, no nothing, so just we…we really needed help then, even if…and to stay, where to…a place to live or a place to eat. So this was just handed out to us so we will be able to get [unintelligible 1:05:09.6].

Interviewer: What was your health like at the end of the war? When you came at the liberation, were you a healthy man?

Menachem Limor: Well, I was healthy…I was a healthy boy, a healthy guy, I just…in Buchenwald, as I told you, I was in the hospital and just…we were standing sometimes hours outside in snow when they were counting us

and they I just got a very bad cold and I had a chance to go…they took me somehow for a short while to that hospital.

Interviewer: Were there other injuries that happened to you during your experiences?

Menachem Limor: Not injuries, I just got in that ammunition factory where I was…

Interviewer: Yes.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, and also, we had…every morning, they were counting us if someone didn't run away or whatever. And maybe I mentioned that you couldn't sleep in the place because there were that may roaches, and other things that didn't let you sleep, all kinds of insects. So, I was sleeping in a place outside where there… because sometimes I was late for the count and whoever was late for the count had to come into a certain place where you are receiving beating. You had to lean over and they were beating you.

Interviewer: Did they do this with your clothes on or did you take your clothes off?

Menachem Limor: No, it was with your clothes on and they may even…there was one that he…it happened to me a few times, about…and once, that man told me, today, you will beat the people. And he gave me that stick and because I wasn't the only one that was late and I had to beat the other people and they were really happy because I was a youngster and I couldn't beat them as hard.

Interviewer: So this was good news.

Menachem Limor: Yeah. And I was beating them and he was standing and said, stronger, harder, harder. Well, after everyone refuses, well, now I will show you how you should beat.

Interviewer: And then he did—

Menachem Limor: I had to lay down and he showed me how to beat.

Interviewer: What did they use for these beatings.

Menachem Limor: They had, it was a wooden stick like a…well, it's not a baseball…something like a baseball bat but shorter.

Interviewer: And this was used when he showed you how you were supposed to be beating them?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, just to feel how hard you should beat somebody.

Interviewer: After the liberation, Menachem, where did you go?

Menachem Limor: After the liberation, I wanted to go to Poland to find my brother which was…I was to get my brother in that ammunition factory and my brother wasn't shipped out, I was shipped out, I didn't know what happened to him so I wanted to go back to Poland to find my brother. But my brother left Poland and he came to look for me and we met in Buchenwald which was also a long story. Well, I wanted to go to Poland. I was already on a bus that was supposed to take me to Poland but there came a woman and she said she had news that her son is sick in Poland. She has to go back to Poland. Because I was the youngest person on the bus…

Interviewer: They took you away?

Menachem Limor: You will go down, you will go with the next bus. So I didn't have a choice and I went down. I left the bus. My brother meantime, he went to look for me and he came to Buchenwald to look for me because they heard that we were taken to Buchenwald, and he looked for me and he came over there, he couldn't find me. He found…they said I'm not there and then on a piece of paper…he found a piece of paper that I got from…I got over there a suit after the liberation and I signed for that suit and he

showed them that I got that suit. They said, well, he was a youngster so probably he was…he left already…they left…those youngsters left here in Buchenwald and left. They went…part of them to United States, part to Sweden so he is not here. They went from here to France and from France they are supposed to go to United States and to Sweden. So my brother wanted to go to look for me in France and on the way, he met somebody from our town and he said…and they started talking and he asked him what you are doing? He said, "I want to go to France to look for my brother." "But your brother, I saw him just here about 10 minutes ago." And he brought him over to me and this was the way we met. As it was, if not had met he would look for me to France and I could go maybe back to Poland and who knows when and if we would meet.

Interviewer: Do you remember meeting him?

Menachem Limor: Oh sure.

Interviewer: Is that a memory you have?

Menachem Limor: Sure, I remember. We met and then…I was then ready…I wanted to go back to Poland because this was actually my only nation then. But he told me, nothing to go…there is no way to go to Poland, there are no Jewish people and they hate the Jews the same way they did before, and we decided we will go to a town, to a port next to a sea that we will be able to get, to emigrate somehow from Germany, to leave Europe, to go away from them. And we went…from over there, we went to Hamburg, which is on a port on the sea, and that's how I met my brother [unintelligible 1:11:02.0].

Interviewer: And from Hamburg…

Menachem Limor: From Hamburg, there were a Jewish brigade which was in the British army, there was a Jewish brigade, we met over there soldiers from the Jewish brigade and they picked up a lot of youngsters, we were together, and we went from over there to Israel.

Interviewer: To Israel, and that was in what year?

Menachem Limor: This was in 1946.

Interviewer: What did you do in Israel?

Menachem Limor: In Israel, at the beginning, I was in a kibbutz and then, you probably didn't hear about, but there was kind of an unofficial army in Israel which was called Palmach. I was over there also in Palmach and then all of these…all that I went through in the concentration camps and the experience in Europe made me want to have a Jewish name and I…also, I was a youngster that's 16 years old, I volunteered to that army which was kind of an underground army, and I was one of the first soldiers in the Israeli army. And I took part in the War of Independence, I got injured, I was injured very hard in the War of Independence. I survived and I'm glad I was in that war.

Interviewer: Coming right after the experience you had, it must mean something.

Menachem Limor: Yes, but I was ready to give, not only part of me only, even my life for the consulate.

Interviewer: What brought you to the United States?

Menachem Limor: What?

Interviewer: What brought you to the United States?

Menachem Limor: Oh, my brother, he came to the United States and because he's the only one that was left from my family. And he had also…was once here in a car wreck and he needed me also here. I just came over here to be together with him.

Interviewer: And what year was that?

Menachem Limor: This was 1968.

Interviewer: 1968. And was that in Nashville that you came?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: That's where he had located himself?

Menachem Limor: Yes. And I'm here in Nashville from 1968.

Interviewer: Do you have any idea of how he came to pick Nashville as the place to be? Another story huh?

Menachem Limor: Yeah. That's another story but that's an interesting story.

Interviewer: Yes, tell the story please.

Menachem Limor: His wife, Elizabeth Limor, they were also in Israel, my brother and his wife, and she thought that she lost all her family, like most of us did, she was just left by herself. And she was working as a seamstress in somebody's house and she saw over there a picture, a picture of her brother which was married to somebody from that family where she was working. And the brother, he survived, he was an engineer here working for a plant, I don't remember which plant, in Nashville Tennessee. So she got in touched with him this way. This is really a miracle esyt she found him, otherwise, she wouldn't find him. And when she found him, he wanted her to come here and she came over here, so she was here, then I came to my brother.

Interviewer: We only have a short time left and I'd like to ask you a few more questions. How do you think your wartime experiences in Germany or in Poland changed you?

Menachem Limor: Well, I learned that no matter who you are, something can happen to you and all I am telling you now, I would like the people to always remember that things like this, as much as…unbelievable as they seem to be, they can happen to anybody. All they have to do is just remember that and do everything possible so that this won't happen again to nobody, because I was lucky but not…a lot of people were not as lucky as me, so I was lucky and I survived but this shouldn't happen to nobody in no time.

Interviewer: And again, these were not things you expected at the time. You didn't see them coming but they can happen.

Menachem Limor: That's right. You never can tell who would be next. I don't know if the Germans would continue, if the Germans would be winning the war, and they would finish with all the Jewish people. I'm sure they would find, I don't know, Polish, Russian, gypsies, whoever, because exactly like they didn't have no reason why to kill Jewish people, they didn't have to look for a reason to kill or to exterminate other people. If you want to do it, especially if they build factories for killing, and a factory has to work, you can't leave it empty not working, they would finish with all the Jewish people in those death factories, they would find other material, they will find other people to kill.

Interviewer: Do you…your feeling of being a Jew, how has that been affected, will you imagine, by the experiences that you've had?

Menachem Limor: Well, especially, after I was in Israel and I fought for Israel, I feel very proud being a Jew, and I just feel like I did whatever I can in other nation. I feel Jewish, I don't hide it. I don't ever hide, I am proud of it and I teach my children to be Jewish, my children know all the history, all that I told you now, they know it for many years already. I told them those stories from the beginning because I want them to know, I want them to continue knowing it and to tell it to their children, to my grandchildren. I also talked in some schools before the students. I told them the same thing. Whatever you do, I just want it that once you will have your

children, tell them that you saw somebody, somebody that was in concentration camp and went through all this, talked to you. Because there are some people that say that it even didn't happen. There are some people that say that even…I know, I went through it, all my family, I lost and there are people that say it never happened. All I want that people know that things like this did happen and never to forget it, and do every possible thing that it will never, never happen again.

Interviewer: Menachem, again, thank you very much. I believe you have some photographs that maybe we might finish our interview with your showing—

Menachem Limor: Yeah, I was…three years ago, I went to Poland, to Treblinka, where my mother and brother were killed. There are still some cattle cars that people were brought in over there and those are the same kind of cars that I was riding also to Buchenwald and then—

Interviewer: Did you have a picture of the inside of one of those cars?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, I have inside also, it's not too good of a picture but I have a picture also of inside of the car which has nothing in it and we were in a car like this for a whole week, about…I don't know, about a hundred people in the car and no toilets, no nothing, no food, some people dead, some people…

Interviewer: These actually were the cars that were used to get people to…

Menachem Limor: Yes. They stayed over there, they left over there. You don't see the beginning and the end of the cars. So long are those trains that you don't see no end and no beginning. You have here…all that's left from Treblinka are stones like this that represent a town. This is the town with Czestochowa which is my town and this is…I took a picture of this, this is all that is left from my town and from my family, from my mother and my brother, that's all that's left. That's all I remember. You have over there…I don't have my…this is…it's hard to see but—

Interviewer: Maybe I could read that one, I think you have one that's also in Hebrew that you might show the camera—

Menachem Limor: Yeah, that's right, that's the same thing that's written in Yiddish.

Interviewer: Yes, why don't you show the camera that one? It says, there was here a Nazi extermination camp between 1942 and 1945. More than 800,000 Jews from Poland, USSR, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Austria, France, Belgium, Germany, and Greece were murdered. On August 2nd, 1943, the prisoner camp organized an armed revolt which was crushed in blood by the Nazis and Nazi hangmen. Penitents, by the camp distance…I'm unable to read a portion, the Nazi murdered an estimated number of 10,000 Poles between 1941 and 1944. This was another area two kilometers from this town. What others do you have?

Menachem Limor: Some just memorials...kind of memorials that say "Never again," in a few languages. In Hebrew, in Yiddish, in English, in French I think. And this is also kind of memorial because all the camp was destroyed completely so there would be no signs that something like this happened.

Interviewer: It was destroyed by the Germans?

Menachem Limor: By the Germans of course, not to leave a…I was also, when I was in Poland, I was also in Auschwitz. And over there, they also…they didn't have time to blow up everything. But you can see over there some places there but a lot of it is just blown up what whatever they could destroy. They destroy not just to leave signs that something happened over there. That's a kind of experience that really, nobody should go through, nobody deserves it and nobody profits from it either.

Interviewer: Thank you very much Menachem Limor.

Menachem Limor: You're welcome.

Transcript (2002)

Menachem and Lea Limor (2002)

A09

39m55s

Menachem Limor: So, actually, from my family, almost just me and one more brother stayed alive.

Interviewer: Your mother was sent to Treblinka--

Menachem Limor: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: --with your brother.

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Was that the last time you saw her?

Menachem Limor: Yes. It was in 1942.

Interviewer: Was that the last time you saw your brother also?

Menachem Limor: Just one. Yes. I had one brother.

Interviewer: You said one with you in the ghetto.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Where was your father at this time?

Menachem Limor: My father was killed in 1940. He was shot by the Germans in 1940 in the ghetto.

Interviewer: From the ghetto, what happened?

Menachem Limor: Then, I was luckily...when they eliminated the ghetto, they finished in the ghetto, the small ghetto in Czestochowa and they were also sending people, either sending people there to Treblinka or other camps and some people, they took to work and I was...I succeeded to go with the group to work in a labor camp in Czestochowa, a town where we live, there was an ammunition factory and I worked in that factory till...

Interviewer: You were a machine operator.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, machine operator, everything that was possible. Sometimes, the Germans, you know, they had also ducks. They asked me to take those ducks, to take care of their ducks, geese, and ducks. But mostly, it's machine operator I was working as.

Interviewer: You were how old by this time?

Menachem Limor: Thirteen.

Interviewer: Thirteen or 14?

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Tell me, how did you...how did you learn to operate the machine?

Menachem Limor: Well, they taught....showed me what to do and I had to do it. If you didn't do it right, then...

Interviewer: Where was your brother at this time?

Menachem Limor: He was also working?

Interviewer: Was he at camp with you?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, he was also working at that camp.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit more about the camp.

Menachem Limor: When we were living over there in the wooden shacks that were, you know, people were laying one next to the other like...really like sardines. And it wasn't...you didn't have hygiene because you didn't have where to take a shower and you had over there lice and all kinds of...it was...well, it's really hard to describe now after you live such a normal life. It's really hard to describe how bad it was. But it was terrible. And the food, you didn't get too much food getting a piece of bread in one small bowl of soup a day. And that was what it was and I remember one...one day I had a toothache and then told me, "Well, you have to go to dentist."

Elizabeth Limor: Can I talk now?

Male: Sure.

Elizabeth Limor: You need to ask him of specific...it's very hard for me to talk the couple of of years. So, you need to ask him more details, you know. I'll give you [unintelligible 0:03:38] so then he'll remember all the events.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

Menachem Limor: So, where were we?

Interviewer: I am curious and we'll get a little bit more into the details of the camp and I am curious about how do you think you were surviving during the day? I mean I know physically you were surviving but how were you...where were you getting your will to keep going?

Menachem Limor: Well, I would tell you. We had...in that camp in Czestochowa, we had over there...he wasn't....I don't think he was a rabbi but he was a very religious man and he tried to teach people, especially youngsters whatever he could and he told us, "You do every possible thing to survive and stay alive so that people will know what happened here." That...those were his words that I remember til today and I try to follow it as long as I could for this reason and also for the reason or surviving because, you know, the...you want to stay alive, the will of life is pushing you to do things that you don't think about but you do it. And I did every possible thing. If I...you know, in order to survive, they were always taking children out to...because they didn't need children. To look older, I was, you know, if it was snow, then, I was making a pile of snow and trying to stand on a pile of snow when they were counting us so that I will look taller and maybe older so they won't think that I'm a child and take me out for it and it's just...I think that this helped me because, you know, if you are small, they were right away were disposing of you because what do they need you for? They need..they needed people that were strong and able to do any work that they needed. Children, they were like burden for them, so what do they need it? So this was a thing that I think that helped me that...to survive not once, you know, just to pass through a selection. You know, we're standing sometimes. We were standing hours in the snow. This is especially later in Buchenwald. That was in January and February and March. In Germany, it's so cold and were standing hours outside and they were counting us and always making mistakes in counting so counting and recounting and we were standing hours in the freezing temperatures. So, I was then making piles of snow with my feet, with my shoes and then standing on that pile so I will look as tall as other people, at least, so they...that they will, you know, that they won't take me out from it. So, and the...as I told you, I was, in the family, you know, I was a strong and healthy child. And it helped me also. I was...I was pretty strong because I was also saying, you know, my family we were well off and I ate good and I was...I was taken care of as long as my mother lived. So, it helped me also to be strong and healthy.

Interviewer: Did your faith play a part at all?

Menachem Limor: No...no...I can't especially...yes, sometimes, you know, we were always questioning how can this possibly happen if you have a God, but, you know, you did every possible thing just to stay alive. You didn't have chances, you know, to pray.

Elizabeth Limor: Tell her about the beating that you get from there.

Menachem Limor: Well, you did every possible thing to survive, like, you know, there were...I told you about this counting. Sometimes, if you were late for the count, you had to go to a special place where they were beating you as a punishment for being late. And because I was a child, so one of those days, the Germans that were beating and I was there a few times so he remembered me. He said, "Well, today, you will do the beating." And he gave me that stick and there were other people with me that were also late and they had to lay down and I had to beat them with that...it was like a baseball bat, something like this. And they were...the other people were happy that I am beating them because I wasn't as strong as the German. So, I was beating and they...he told me, stronger, stronger. I couldn't beat them stronger. At the end, he said, "Well, now, I will show you how you are supposed to beat somebody and I had to lay down and he beat me and I just...I just passed out and it's just one of those beatings I got from them for just being late a few minutes to a count.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit more about later. You were at the camp for how long?

Menachem Limor: In that camp, I was about 2 years, I think.

Interviewer: You were there for 2 years.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, and then, they sent me from that camp and the Russians were coming closer to the town where we were in. They sent me out...back out to Buchenwald. That was a trip in a cattle car, you know, about 100 people....we were about 100 people in one car and the trip was about, I don't remember, 4 or 5 days from Poland to Buchenwald to Germany. It was in January. It was cold and from there, they closed the door of the car. They didn't open until we got to Buchenwald and people died over there and, you know, people relieved over there and it was all that dirt and smell and every...you had to live in that place. And--

Interviewer: And this was when? Do you recall?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, this was in January in 1945.

Interviewer: And this was when you were being transported to which camp?

Menachem Limor: Buchenwald in Germany.

Interviewer: And that's where you were liberated in April.

Menachem Limor: Yes.

Interviewer: Right?

Menachem Limor: Right.

Interviewer: So, tell me, what did you do in Buchenwald?

Menachem Limor: In Buchenwald, it was already towards the end of the war and they were supposed to ship us to another factory that was making ammunition but they didn't have enough trains. So, we're just in Buchenwald. Most what we did, we were standing the cold as I told you and they...they waited for people to die...to die and a lot of people died over there, you know, just from cold and from they didn't have enough food. And I didn't work in Buchenwald, except...I didn't work in Buchenwald.

Interviewer: When did you start hearing or finding possible rumors that there was liberation from the Soviets?

Menachem h Limor: From the Soviets, I didn't have rumors. When we were in Buchenwald, we had, you know, the bombings...planes were bombing each time closer and closer to our area. And then, it was on April 11, 1945, we came out and we didn't see the Germans anymore in the towers, you know, the watch towers. We didn't see Germans and we climbed on the roof of the wooden barracks that we were living in and we saw from both sides of Buchenwald tanks, American tanks coming from both sides of Buchenwald. And that's how we were liberated.

Elizabeth Limor: And you go back and tell her about the piece of bread that you had.

Menachem Limor: On the train...when I left Poland to Buchenwald on the train, I had a piece of bread with me I had in my pocket. And because we didn't get no food on the way, so each night, I was doing it at night because I was afraid that somebody will know I have a piece of bread and will take it away from me. So, each time at night, I was breaking this small piece of bread and eating just, just to stay alive. So...

Interviewer: One bite of bread at night.

Menachem Limor: Yeah. That was on my way to...on the shipment to...from Poland to Buchenwald.

Interviewer: So, your one piece of bread was your meal for 5 days in transport?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, yeah. Well, I divided it each time.

Interviewer: About this small.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, and of course, to drink water or something, we had...we were scraping snow from the roof of the car and melting it into water. And this reminds me of, you know, I told that story to my granddaughter and she was

Elizabeth Limor: Six.

Menachem Limor: Six, or 7 years old, when she was at second grade, I think. The teacher asked the children, “What do you see...from nature, what do you know about things that are really use and good for people?”

Elizabeth Limor: Rain.

Menachem Limor: Rain because things are growing and somebody said “snow.” She said, “No, snow is not that important because it's cold.” And my daughter, my granddaughter, she

was 7 years old she said, “No, snow is very important. If not snow, my grandfather, wouldn't stay alive,” and she told them the story that I was scraping the snow and melting them and really, it made me feel so special and good that somebody could tell it, even a girl of 7 years old could tell things like this.

Interviewer: She'll forever associate snow with life.

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's just amazing you gave her that. Tell me a little bit about April 11th.

Menachem Limor: April--

Interviewer: You saw the tanks coming from the roof.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, and then of course, the American troops came in and you suddenly felt free because you could go wherever you wanted. Nobody told you no and nobody was shooting at you. Nobody was beating you and we got food enough, more than enough even because some people ate too much and got sick from it.

Interviewer: Tell me about that first meal. Do you remember what it was.

Menachem Limor: At first, we were there...what I made was actually...I like always scrambled eggs with sausage. And I didn't have...we didn't have eggs. We had egg powder.

Elizabeth Limor: Okay, one minute, I'll be doing the egg powder.

Menachem Limor: Egg powder and I made like scrambled eggs with sausage. This was the first thing that I ate and I really enjoyed it. And then, we had food, normal food. We are getting normal food.

Interviewer: This was in the hospital? I mean what did you eat when the liberators came? Do you remember?

Menachem Limor: Well, I was...I got sick a short time before the liberation and I was in the hospital in Czestochowa over there, and over there in the hospital, I was with Polish people which they...they helped me out a lot. And they had some food they got from Red Cross or whatever. I don't know exactly what kind of sources but they had more food and I was...they were giving me some food, some extra food. So, that was...that helped me out too. And from them, I also got some of the powdered egg that I told you and the sausage.

Interviewer: How were you feeling about that time you were liberated?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, I was liberated.

Interviewer: Without your parents.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, well, I knew that my brother, other brother that was left in Poland, I knew that he wasn't shipped that he was left over there. So, I was thinking about going back to Poland to look for him. And maybe this is...this is also I have to say too and my brother knew that I was shipped to Germany so he wanted...he survived in Poland. A day after I was shipped to Buchenwald, he was liberated in Poland, in the same camp that we were working. And he was looking...he knew that from all our family, if somebody survived and it's me and I knew that if somebody survived, it was him. So, he decided that he would go and looking for me in Germany and I wanted to go look for him in Poland and at that time, we didn't have transportation, regular transportation and I was already in a line to go in a bus that was supposed to go to Poland and there was just a certain amount of people that will be on the bus and then came over there a woman, a Polish woman. She said she has to go to Poland because she heard her son is injured and sick and she has to go to Poland. She won't move. She stood in front of the bus and she won't move from the bus. She has to go. Well, what did they do? They took the youngest person which was me and they said, “But you will go with the next bus which will be in a couple of days.” And they took me off of the bus and that woman went on and they left. A day after that, my brother arrived in Buchenwald to look for me.

Interviewer: That's amazing.

Menachem Limor: And he looked for me and the Jewish committee that was over there. And they told him, “Well, he's not here on the list,” because I was listed Polish. I told you, I was with the Polish people in that hospital and I want to go back to Poland. So, I was on the Polish list. And they said, “Well, if he is not here, then he probably was sent to France.” That was all the youngsters that stayed here were sent to France. From there, part of them, they're going to Palestine, part to the United States and part to Sweden. Well, so, what he decided he will go to France. He goes outside and then he meets somebody from our town who tells him, he tells him, “How did you come?” He said, “Well, I came from Poland to look for my brother and they sent him to France.” He said, “What France? I saw him just half an hour ago. He's fixing a bike over there.” And he took him and he took him and brought him over there. And this was also lucky because if he would go to France and then I will after 2 days go to Poland, I don't know if we would meet again. I don't know when and how if we would meet again but it was a lucky day for bot of us that and things like this worked out.

Interviewer: What was the reunion like?

Menachem Limor: Oh, it was...well, he knew...he saw me. When I...when he came and that man brought him, he called me, Liepschitz, that was my name then and I turned around, I saw him. It was like...like a miracle. I wouldn't believe that will happen. You know, I wanted it to happen and I did every possible thing that it will happen. That's why I was ready to go to Poland and he was there to come to Germany and that happened and from then on, we were together.

Interviewer: Where did you go from there?

Menachem Limor: We went...because the place where we were was supposed to be on the transfer to the Russian side. We decided that we will go to another zone, not to stay in the Russian zone. We will go to the American zone or British zone and we decided that there's no place for us to stay in Europe. We will go to a place that is close to sea and maybe will catch a ship to some place. And we went to Hamburg in Germany. And over there, I was in Hamburg. Over there I met a Jewish soldiers that were in the Jewish brigade and the British army and they took all the youngsters together, started to teach us, made a school, and started to teach us and put in us the love of Israel and from there, I went to Israel.

Interviewer: How long were you in Israel?

Menachem Limor: In Israel, it was 22 years.

Interviewer: Twenty-two years.

Menachem Limor: I was in Israel from 1946 and I was became the first soldiers in the Israeli army. That was even before in palmach, which was a kind of an underground unit and I was injured in the battles of Jerusalem. I got a bullet here in my head. And I was in Israel for 22 years.

Interviewer: What brought you to the States?

Menachem Limor: My brother, he ended up in the United States and I was in Israel and then he was here and he got...he got injured in a traffic accident and they needed some help here. And I came over to be with him here.

Interviewer: Here, here in Tennessee?

Menachem Limor: Yeah, in Nashville.

Interviewer: In Nashville. And so, you came here in 1968.

Menachem Limor: Yes, and I'm here until today and probably until the day I will die.

Interviewer: When did you start...when did you start really dealing with memories and things like that?

Menachem Limor: Well, at the beginning really, I didn't talk about...too much about it. And then, when I was here, I was approached also to talk before schools, students. And I was talking for a while. I remember one time, I was at school and a girl wrote me a letter because I finished my talk and I told them, “One thing I would like to remember is always that the people, they are talking that there is...that it never happened, the holocaust, that you will be able to tell them that you met a holocaust survivor and you know that something like this happened. And I hope that you will tell it to your children and grandchildren about things like this.” And that girl wrote me a letter and she wrote me. “I came home and I told my dad and my mom and my

grandfather about things that you told me and they said that they never heard about it. So, I can promise you that I will tell it to everybody and even to my children and grandchildren." It just made me feel so good because a girl like this, she was, I don't know, probably 12 years old or 13 years old, and if she promised something and she told her...even her parents and her grandfather about things that they didn't hear about, and they didn't know about it, so I was really...I was really happy to get that letter and I was talking about it but it was time, I don't know, I'm getting soft or, I don't know, I started crying and I cannot talk.

Elizabeth Limor: He's crying and he usually never cries. A person never cries but [unintelligible 0:25:27]

Menachem Limor: It just makes me feel uncomfortable.

Elizabeth Limor: And he usually talked about it. I'm his wife but I know every little detail and my children know every detail and my granddaughters from a young age were allowed to ask him anything and they know everything about his life. So, it's been...actually, we continued on to tell.

Male: What if you think she sat next to him?

Elizabeth Limor: Sure.

Male: Would you like to sit next to him?

Elizabeth Limor: I'm sorry. I...we went about 12 years ago to Poland and I...when we came there, I recognized the place. It's like I lived there, you know. I was born in Palestine in Israel, you know, I mean a sabra. But I knew so much every little detail that I felt, you know, that I was there. I never can feel what he went through and I cannot understand how somebody can go through things like this and stay alive. I'm sure that if I would be in the cattle cars, you know, going to Buchenwald, I wouldn't survive.

Interviewer: I have a question about that, about, you know, that you said, you knew that in your family, if anyone survived, it was your brother and he knew that if anyone survived, it was you. And then, earlier, you said that, you know, when you did decided not to go out of your hiding place in the ghetto, you didn't attribute that to bravery but, you know, you just, you

know, wanted to survive and that sort of thing. You knew that was what you have to do to survive. But what characteristics do you think are in a person who you feel like, you know, that makes you think that they could survive. Like what do you...what do you base...why do you think that your brother would have survived, you know? What are those things?

Menachem Limor: Well, it's simple. I knew...I knew that my parents, my mother and brother were sent to Treblinka which was a death camp and nobody survived in that camp. My brother, it was just about 3 months, 4 months, 3 or 4 months that we separated and I think 3 or 4 months was more...he was young and strong. So, I believed that if somebody...if somebody could survive, he would...he could...he would be able to survive. If. But, it wasn't because he was in a death camp and I knew and I heard that the Russians were coming over there and they liberated the town. So...

Interviewer: You know, some--

Elizabeth Limor: This is not--

Interviewer: --some survivors have said, it was serendipitous. It was luck that they survived. Some said it was faith. Some said it was strength.

Elizabeth Limor: Yeah I think--

Menachem Limor: And I think it's all together.

Interviewer: You think it's a combination?

Menachem Limor: I think it's a combination of all together because nobody was too smart...smarter or stronger. It was just...it was really a combination of all together because some days you were lucky. Some days you were smart and some days you were...I don't know. Someone else was stupid.

Interviewer: were you a religious man when you went in?

Menachem Limor: No, not because you might--

Elizabeth Limor: He was 10 years old.

Menachem Limor: No, my mother was more religious than my father I would say, I guess. We had the rel--

Interviewer: So, you didn't come from an Orthodox home.

Menachem Limor: No, not Orthodox but we were religious.

Elizabeth Limor: But you went to the [unintelligible 0:28:44]

Menachem Limor: My mother, we were living a Jewish life and, you know, on holidays, we were going to the synagogue and...

Interviewer: The reason why I asked you is because some people have said that it was their faith and their religion and their upbringing that kept them through. And some people felt that it wasn't.

Menachem Limor: No I--

Interviewer: What you...

Menachem Limor: I wouldn't say that religion kept me but...

Elizabeth Limor: He was the youngest child of 3 children and they had a nanny that if he forgot his food, brought him food to school so it was not...he was strong, built strong, you know. But he was not ready to things like this but is a very strong-willed person. Even after he was injured, he did things that nobody else does. He's is 63% disabled but he never felt this way and he never act this way. So, I think that he's a very strong person not only physically but

mentally because when he told you about the children that he stayed with the 2 of them, it's not only that he didn't leave, he put his hands on their mouths that they will not say anything. So, these are things that came to him naturally.

Interviewer: And that's extraordinary for his age.

Menachem Elizabeth Limor: Yeah, I was 10, 11 years old, I think.

Male: And with that experience in the ghetto.

Menachem Limor: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you recognize now as an adult having children that were 11 and 10, do you recognize how extraordinary that was?

Menachem Limor: Yes and why I did it, until today I don't know. I can't explain. I did it but I don't know why.

Elizabeth Limor: They-they had some wires that were...they were hiding in a furniture factory that all was wood between furniture and there were only women and children and there was a fire from a wire and he said that he took some coffee. They had very, very thick coffee and threw it on it and the fire, you know, and they didn't have the fire and he still doesn't know why it did it but it worked. Sometimes it could be--

Menachem Limor: You know, this was just an instinct, you know, where you have fire, you want to...and the, you know, electricity and water or some liquid don't work together. But...and that coffee was, you know, the thick--

Elizabeth Limor: Grains.

Menachem Limor: The grains of coffee set on that wire and this what kept the fire out.

Elizabeth Limor: So, this is also luck, you know, but, he did something. Nobody did anything. He just--

Menachem Limor: These people told me later that what I did was right. I didn't do it because I knew it was right.

Elizabeth Limor: Yeah.

Menachem Limor: It's just that you did the right thing at the time.

Interviewer: What do you want people to know?

Menachem Limor: What?

Interviewer: About what happened. What would you want people to know?

Menachem Limor: First of all, I would like nobody to forget that it happened. This is number one. And then, of course, do every possible thing that it won't happen again to nobody, not only Jewish people to anybody else in the world because this is something that is so unnatural. You don't do it to...we are having pets and we are having...taking care of animals and everything and just to act this towards people, I think this is...I don't know. I can't understand how we can...how somebody can be cruel like this.

Elizabeth Limor: I think that the worst thing that they did, they took their dignity because we were nothing. If we were going in the street and if a German wanted to kill you, he will shoot and kill you. If he wanted to hit you, he would hit you, you know. You were nothing. So, you strive not to be seen, you know, not to be seen so nothing will happen to him.

Interviewer: How do you deal with the memories now?

Menachem Limor: I believe in reason but I would tell...let's say, if I think now about the German people, if I think about German people my age, I think what could they do? They were

my age. I couldn't do nothing. They couldn't do nothing but their fathers and grandfathers, them I will never forget and I will never stop blaming them for whatever they did. So, actually, really, I how I can blame somebody? If I was 12 years old, what could another 12 year-old boy do to... thatwon'thappen. If he is doing...if they do today things this won't happen, I would appreciate it because this is the right thing to do. But I will never forget what their fathers and grandfathers did. This I will never forget and nobody should ever forget.

Interviewer: You know, I've heard...I've heard survivors say they felt more betrayed by their countrymen than by the Nazis themselves. Did you feel that way?

Elizabeth Limor: This...probably his father felt this way because the father had a big shoe factory that was the biggest in Poland and he dealt with the Germans and his mother wanted to go to Palestine, you know, when it started and he said, "I deal with these people. They are my friends," and he never thought that some...that they will do something to him. So, I'm sure that he felt betrayed. His mother probably, the older people felt betrayed. As a child, he probably, you know--

Interviewer: As a child, you have a sense of feeling protected by adults and you weren't protected by them any longer.

Menachem Limor: No. I didn't have...really, Polish people, personally, they didn't do to me nothing wrong. On the contrary, as I told you in Buchenwald, Polish people helped me out. But they were also...they were not regular Polish people. They were people that were also in camp. They were also arrested and subjected to all the prosecutions. So, you know, like one...like one inmate to another, they were helping. It wasn't just like helping me because I was better or worse. And some...I know about...I know about the people, even one of my cousins that I was hiding with and I was taken...I left that hiding place. She was in that hiding place and a Polish child discovered it, that hiding place and brought the Germans over there and she got killed because of it. So, some Polish people didn't help us. They did the wrong things. But personally, to me, it didn't happen.

Elizabeth Limor: But I want to say that during all the years, he wasn't emotional about it. He was telling it as it is that people will know about it and they...he wasn't emotional about it. At night, sometimes, he will tremble or give a cry. He doesn't what it is. I will pet him and tell him it's okay and we sleep back. But he has some bad memories that he probably dreams about them. He doesn't want to acknowledge. He says it's nothing because this is the kind of person he is. He doesn't want to acknowledge that it still bothers him. It's only lately that he is

very emotional and maybe because of his age, you know, it comes back and maybe things, he sees it different, you know, than he saw it all the years. So, he's very much emotional lately.

Menachem Limor: I think also at the beginning of the...after the liberation and even towards the end of the liberation, I tried maybe to put out...not to think about it which helped me maybe to survive because, you know, if you were thinking about it every minute and everyday, you were losing...you were losing your faith in life, and keeping it out of your mind, just telling yourself you have to keep going on and don't look about the bad things that happened and just look for tomorrow that maybe tomorrow will be a better day. It helped me also.

Interviewer: April 11th remains a special day for you.

Menachem Limor: Yes, that's right. I am just...I am celebrating it like my second birthday which is, you know, not official because I'm not getting twice older in a year, but...

Interviewer: But it's a rebirth, you know.

Menachem Limor: Yeah, it's like...because I think if this didn't happen, April 11, I don't know how long I would stay alive, maybe another day, maybe another week, maybe...maybe I wouldn't stay alive at all. So, this is like a second birth to me.

Elizabeth Limor: He had an uncle in Buchenwald that used to help him. He had a little bit more food than everybody to give him some food to the [unintelligible 0:37:48] and in the end, they took all the people to march, you know, they wanted to take all the people. Because he was in the hospital, they didn't take him and the uncle wanted to help him but they told him if you will help him, they will take you. So, the uncle went off to march and perished, of course, you know.

Menachem Limor: You know, as I told you--

Elizabeth Limor: He felt very bad about it.

Menachem Limor: You were asking about people, the Polish people helped me in that hospital and those Polish people, they were actually like the...they were responsible for it, you

know, they were looking at everthing...they were working and they said, “If the Germans are coming here to take you,” because sometimes the Germans are coming to take, you know, they were taking all the Jewish people, they might take out the Jewish sick people from the hospital also. If your name is not Marian [unintelligible and your number is not 114980 or your number would be a different number,” a different name because they wanted to switch me with a person, a Polish person that they knew he was so sick that he won't survive. So, they wanted to switch me, give him in my name, if the Germans come. So, actually, those people helped me. They were Polish but to me, they were friendly at that time. And they did a lot for me, they did. So...

Interviewer: So, you hold on to that too.

Elizabeth Limor: Yeah.

Menachem Limor: There are...there are all kinds of people everywhere.

Elizabeth Limor: Actually he came in sick but he got better. They asked him if he wanted to stay there. They didn't send him back. If they would send him back, who knows if he would be alive. They gave him, you know, a pajama or something to wear and they asked him to help in the hospital, you know, to do things in the hospital. So, this way, he stayed there and I'm sure that it helped him to survive. So it's, again, it's luck too, you know. It's strength and luck and, you know, everything.

Interviewer: Strength, and luck, and faith.

Elizabeth Limor: And faith.

Interviewer: It's been a very...it's been a tremendous honor meeting with you today.