

Museum of History and Holocaust Education Legacy Series
Hershel Greenblat interview
Conducted by James Newberry
July 8, 2014
Transcribed by Caitlin O'Grady

Hershel Greenblat

Born in Ukraine in 1941, Hershel Greenblat spent the first two years of his life hiding in underground caves. His parents were resistance fighters who left him in the care of friends when they carried out attacks on the Nazis. After the war Greenblat's family lived in a succession of displaced person camps before immigrating to the United States. Greenblat lives in Alpharetta, Georgia. He recorded his oral history interview at Kennesaw State University in July 2014.

Full Transcript

Interviewer: Ok. This is James Newberry, and I'm here with Hershel Greenblat on Tuesday, July 8, 2014 at Sturgis Library at Kennesaw State University. Mr. Greenblat, do you agree to this interview?

Greenblat: Yes, I do.

Interviewer: Alright, thank you. If you could, please state your full name at birth.

Greenblat: My full name at birth was Grischa Grinblat.¹

Interviewer: [Mmhmm]

Greenblat: Spelled G-R-I-N-B-L-A-T.

Interviewer: And when and where were you born?

Greenblat: I was born April 24, 1941. In a small town called Kremenchug.² About fifty miles east of Kiev in the Ukraine.

Interviewer: Ok. And Mr. Greenblat, could you tell me about your parents' backgrounds?

Greenblat: My father was born in Lublin, Poland. 1919. He was a, he was a student. And was a-- My father was the youngest of sixteen children. Fifteen of those children were girls. He basically was just a, a typical, you know, teenager. You know. Growing up with a fairly Orthodox Jewish family. My mother was born in Kremenchug, Russia in the Ukraine. 1916. She was one of...six children. She had, she had two sisters and three brothers. And both, both of her sisters survived

¹ Originally born Grischa Grinblat, his name became Hershel Greenblat after beginning school in the United States.

² Russian Kremenchug is a city in central Ukraine. The industrial city suffered under Nazi occupation during World War II.

the Holocaust because they left as--with a Zionist organization in the early thirties to Israel. I don't know much about her education. She...didn't speak that much about it. She, she just, you know, grew up. Again, in a fairly orthodox home...in Kremenchug.

Interviewer: And you said your father's family was orthodox. So did they-- What sorts of antisemitism did they face in Lublin?

Greenblat: Basically they-- Lublin had a small, had a fairly small ghetto area.³ They were pretty much confined to that area as, as most of the Jewish population in Lublin. They felt--because of their proximity just to where they lived, it was all Jewish families. I don't know if they had nothing to hold popu-- Jewish population in Poland felt...antisemitism. You know, felt that they were being discriminated against just by the, the type of...work that they could do. There weren't-- They felt that there weren't the opportunities that other people had.

Interviewer: Ok. And, and your mother in the Ukraine?

Greenblat: That again, she, she didn't speak that much about, you know her-- They just lived in the ci--in a small town. I don't believe there was any particular ghetto area for Jews in Kremenchug. I don't really know that much about her family history.

Interviewer: Ok. How did your parents meet?

Greenblat: My father...became in, in, in 1930...in the--1939 when the Nazis and Hitler did invade Poland, my father became part of a resistance fighting, fighter group. Fighting the Nazis. He told me that, you know, he--they would go out at night and they would, you know, put Molotov cockt--throw Molotov cocktails at, at German tanks.⁴ They would blow up bridges. They would try to put as much, I guess, resistance toward the Nazis. And one evening in late September of 1939, my father went, went home and was told by his, by his mom that the SS troops were there that afternoon looking for him. And that the, you know, that he had to report to them or, or the family would be taken to a Majdanek.⁵ Which was a concentration camp outside of Lublin. Instead of against reporting he and [clears throat] some of his... Excuse me [clears throat]. Some of his friends escaped across the border into the Ukraine, and met up with a resistance group that my mother was part of. Again, fighting the Nazis that lived in the-- They kind of

³ During the Holocaust, ghettos were established to segregate and ultimately annihilate European Jews. Designed as temporary housing, many Jewish inhabitants died of starvation and disease, or were deported to concentration and extermination camps. The word ghetto originates from the Jewish quarter of Venice in the sixteenth century.

⁴ A Molotov cocktail was a hand-made incendiary device that usually consisted of a bottle filled with flammable liquid.

⁵ Majdanek Concentration Camp was constructed in 1941 as a labor camp outside of Lublin, Poland. Jewish prisoners capable of work were sometimes diverted to Majdanek rather than to the extermination camps.

lived outside of Kremenchug in the, the Priest's Grotto Caves.⁶ Hiding there, and coming out at night. And, again, fighting as, as resistance fighters.

Interviewer: So why do you think that your parents joined resistance groups?

Greenblat: They were young. They felt that they didn't want to be, I guess, annihilated. They, they didn't want to, you know. I felt--they felt that they had to do something. I mean, you know, don't just, you know, you know, just be slaughtered and, you know, like, like cattle, and, and not do anything about it. They felt this was their homes. And they wanted to protect their homes. And they wanted to, I guess, protect their, you know, their way of life.

Interviewer: So did they have a marriage ceremony?

Greenblat: Yes. Yes, they had-- I mean, there was a synagogue in, in, in Kremenchug. They were married August the 5 of, of...1940. And then they, I guess, they joined the-- It was a group that stayed together for years in, in Kremenchug in, in Kiev. In the-- And lived in the, in the caves at the Priest's Grotto, subterranean caves. And that's actually where I was born was in one of those caves.

Interviewer: So how did their lives change after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in 1941?

Greenblat: Well, the, you know-- Basically...for two and a half years they, they did live in the, in the caves. Come out at night. My mother was very, very badly wounded in a, in a skirmish one evening. And, I was about--I was born in April of '41. This I believe happened in September of 1941 where she was wounded in the upper right leg. And my father felt that she was about to lose her leg, and was able to--wanted to get her medical attention. At that point he actually left me with his friends. I mean this was a very, very close knit group. I mean, a lot of them actually escaped together out of Russia after the war. So they... This group of friends took care of me for about nine weeks, while my mother was being-- My father took my mother for medical attention. Where he took her, he never did tell me. But, but he came back. I was still there. I was, according to them I was, you know, very, very ill. I had bad dysentery...diphtheria.⁷ And, so they... But I was still alive and, and I, you know, survived all my illnesses. But it-- We lived in the caves of, of Ukraine.

Interviewer: So the German invasion sort of forced them into hiding in that way.

Greenblat: Yes. It forced, you know...most, you know, most of the young Jew--Jews into hiding, into groups of resistance fighters living in the caves. Living in the forest.

⁶ The Priest's Grotto Caves are located in the Ukraine outside of Kiev. They functioned as a Jewish hiding place during the Nazi occupation. Although some families were caught and killed by the Nazis, others survived the war.

⁷ Dysentery is an intestinal infection that usually causes diarrhea. Diphtheria is a bacterial infection of the mucous in the nose and throat. It often causes a sore throat, fever, and swollen glands.

Coming out at night trying to find, you know, trying to get food. Or, or, or do whatever damage they could to the, you know, to the Germans. The Nazis. Basically shooting, you know. I mean just regular battles. And then going back into hiding.

Interviewer: Did your parents tell you of any specific resistance acts that they carried out?

Greenblat: My father said that a, a lot of what they did is they tried to derail a lot of their transportation aspects of the Nazis coming into Germany. They would, they would blow up some bridges. They would blow up train tracks. They would, you know, start fires. Forest fires in front of them. The... Again, coming out at night with whatever, whatever, you know, weapons and ammunition that they had.

Interviewer: So, what are your earliest memories?

Greenblat: My earliest memories...is when... Actually, when the war ended is--My, I mean, my, my biggest earliest memory is being on the train. On the, in the, in the, in the-- There were two boxcars that my father and his friends or, either bribed or bought or somehow or other were able to get. And about twenty somewhat families were in these two boxcars trying to escape out of Russia before the Iron Curtain, you know, came down in 1945.⁸ This was late, very late, 1945. When it was about a, a two thousand mile trip that they took. That took about eight weeks from Krasnodar. I think it's Krasnodar, Russia. Which was even further east that they escaped...from... They, they left the caves--the Priest's Grottoes Caves--after about two and a half years. And cause they were be, gonna be found out, so they-- And when they left Russia...I guess I was four years old. And my sister, my sister had, my youngest, my second sister, Ann--was three years younger than me--was born when we escaped. That was my first big memory. Being on that train. Being huddled in a corner. We would stop at night and they would let us go out. You know, we were-- Take us off the, off the boxcar and we would go underneath and just go to the bathroom. Do whatever we had to do, and that, you know, parents would go out and try to find some food from local farmers or whatever. And...and I just remember the awful, awful smell inside those box-- It just. And my sister was very, very ill. Ann was very, very ill. And she cried consistan--I mean, constantly. And she was told--my parents were told they had to get her quieted down because they would be stopped for days at a time trying to avoid-- It wasn't the Nazis anymore. Trying to avoid the Russian police and the Russian army because they were trying to stop people from escaping out of, out of Russia. And so...that eight, eight/nine week trip into the American zone of Austria was my first memory.

Interviewer: So let me go back in time a little bit. Could you tell me how your parents described life in the caves. Sort of give us an idea of that experience.

⁸ The Iron Curtain is a political and military barrier created by the Soviet Union after World War II. It sealed the Soviet Union and its central and eastern European allies off from the West and other non-communist countries.

Greenblat: The Priest's Grotto Caves, again, are very, are subterranean. Very, you know... And they--some of the openings were humungous. I mean, there was, it was-- The temperature was like in the high fifties most of the time. Very, very, very dark. The...lived by candlelight. Cooked by, you know, whatever means they had. Whatever fires they could. Pretty much stayed inside the caves at all times. The only time that they left was either to find food from the, you know, again, local farmers. Or they, you know, go out and fight whatever—by whatever means they could. In, in their resistance efforts. So we stayed in the caves pretty much at all time. I mean, from what I understand...I was a year and a half, two years old, when they came out of the cave. So, you know, I didn't see much sunshine for the first, you know, two years of my life. My father, you know, said, when we finally came out, you know, kids finally came out of the cave. Caves would be, you know-- Couldn't fathom that the sunshine, or, or anything like that, that we, you know...we, we were very, very-- Our eyesights were, were, were, were not the best at the time... But we would just live like a normal life. That was our home. That was, that was, that was it. At times, you know, the-- We would be herded into a corner or-- Again, this was my father--to hide because the Nazis were trying to get inside the cave. Trying to find whoever they could down there. The people that lived down there had to have a secret word or, or secret phrase because you had to go down feet first. And if you didn't, if you didn't know the secret--if you couldn't tell them the secret word or the secret phrase or whatever...there was no mercy. They would just...chop your legs off, and, you know. I mean, it was to that extent where it was, you know-- They had to be very, very careful of, or, or they would've been found out.

Interviewer: So, what sort of, of food were they able to get? Was it mostly stealing food? Or hunting?

Greenblat: Most--mostly whatever vegetables and--they could either buy or, or get from the local famers. Chickens. They, you know, my moth--my dad told me they still tried to keep as much of a kosher environment because everybody was fairly orthodox. A kosher environment so they... It was mostly chickens, you know, and some beef. As, as far as I know.

Interviewer: And as you say, keeping kosher. How about those religious customs? How were those maintained...

Greenblat: Ok.

Interviewer: ...in the caves?

Greenblat: Again, my dad said every morning they'd, you know—I mean, Jews pray every morning. And they, they, they have the morning prayers. And then of course they have the, the evening prayers. Afternoon prayers. And, you know, the Sabbath. The Sabbath, they would be down there. They would still light Sabbath

candles.⁹ Shabbat candles on Friday night.¹⁰ And people would... They had, they had a Torah down there and they would read the Torah.¹¹ Thursday nights of course were--and then on Saturday morning.

Interviewer: And do you know the, the details of the, the fight they were involved in when your mother was injured?

Greenblat: All I know is that they were blowing up a bridge outside of, outside of Kremenchug. And the--some shrapnel hit her leg. That's all, that's all that she would ever tell me.

Interviewer: Do you remember the fellow resisters who took care of you while your parents were away. Do you remember their names?

Greenblat: No. I don't.

Interviewer: So at some point your father is arrested by the Russians.

Greenblat: That's correct. [Incoherent] My father was arrested by the Russ-- But this was in Krasnodar, which is again hundreds of miles east of Kremenchug. He was out one night...broke into a some sort of bakery or, or an army of food supply or whatever. And was, was arrested by the Russian police and put into a, a Russian prison for about a year and a half. And actually he was released when the war ended.

Interviewer: And that is when you made the train trip?

Greenblat: That's correct.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you... Did your parents ever talk to you about the, the fears they had at that time? You know, how fearful were they? How unsure were they of what would happen the very next day, the very next moment?

Greenblat: Ok. Let me-- My father was a very, very,very quiet...as I was growing up, very quiet, very strong, very strong disciplinarian. He very rarely talked about how he felt or, or, or, you know, what happened. My mother was also very guarded in, in, in what she told us about, about what happened. Her, her main, I guess, her main concern after the war--as we were growing up was trying, you know, taking care of her children. But they didn't speak of their fears. They didn't speak of, you know, of their concerns or anything like that. They just knew that. My father found out that he, you know, that he lost his whole family, you know, in...at, at Majdanek. And, you know, my mother, you know, found out that she lost her

⁹ The Sabbath is a Jewish religious holy day commanded by God. It begins every Friday evening at nightfall and ends at nightfall on Saturday.

¹⁰ Shabbat is Hebrew for Sabbath.

¹¹ The Torah is recorded in the first five books of Hebrew scripture.

family at Babi Yar.¹² So, their determination to make sure that I and my sister Ann--and later on of course my sister Ethel that was later born in, in Austria--that we were safe. That was, that was their main-- My father's main objection-- objective was to get out alive. Get his family out alive. That was his-- He didn't, he was not gonna become a, a victim of the Holocaust.

Interviewer: Ok. So you said that-- Let's return to the, the train trip west. And this, this was to carry you out of...

Greenblat: Russia.

Interviewer: Russia.

Greenblat: Out of...yes.

Interviewer: And the Soviet territory at that point...

Greenblat: That's correct.

Interviewer: post-war.

Greenblat: Yes.

Interviewer: And so you arrived where?

Greenblat: We arrived in—outside of a DP camp, a displaced persons camp, outside of Salzburg, Austria.¹³ This was late...late 1945 or early 19... I believe it was either December or January. December '45 or January of 1946. Because, you know, I remember very, very strongly that--how cold and the snow, and, and you know, as we got off the train, so... Arrived at night and we were taken, you know. Met by a lot of American soldiers, taken off the train. And we were housed at, at a DP Camp called Beth Bialik outside of Aus--Salzburg, Austria. Basically it was a, a converted army camp of some, some sort. Very, very...the buildings were, you know, dilapidated. You could, you could, you could see the holes in the walls. And the American, you know, soldiers did whatever they could to make us as comfortable as they could. But, you know, and, and we were given, you know, given food and medical attention. But, the barracks were so dilapidated and so rundown that, you know, almost unlivable. We would-- They had, families would kind of become squatters that would just go into a certain part of that particular barrack and they would hang up--I remember they would hang up either sheets or

¹² Babi Yar is a ravine to the northwest of the city of Kiev. Many Jews fled Kiev in advance of the German occupation in 1941. During the first days of German occupation, the Soviet military set off explosions destroying the Nazi headquarters in the city. The Germans used the explosion as an excuse to murder the remaining Jews of Kiev at Babi Yar. Many of these were women, children, and the elderly who were unable to flee.

¹³ After the Jews were liberated by the allies, many lived in Displaced Persons Camps (DP Camps) from 1945-1952. These facilities were administered by the allied powers and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

blankets or whatever they could. And this is, this is, and they would say, “This is our area, this is where our family’s gonna be.” We slept on the floors. I mean, the barracks were rat infested. I mean, I mean, I can still see the humungous...I mean, I mean, these were big rodents just crawling around, crawling around whatever heat vent. You know, whatever heat vents or pipes that, that were, it was like steam heat that was trying... So yeah, we lived in, we lived at the Beth Bialik for about a year and a half. You know, under, you know, conditions that weren’t much better, but no one was trying to kill us.

Interviewer: So how many people? Can you sort of guess at the numbers?

Greenblat: There was-- I mean you, you would be crawling over fam-- There was hundreds and hundreds of people. There was, I mean, from what I remember, there was as far as the eye could see you, you could see barracks. And each barrack there were just people coming and going. And there was no rhyme or reason to, you know, who was there. Who was living there. Who wasn’t living there. One day there was a family there. The next day they weren’t there. There was a lot of children just running around. Some barefoot. I remember some of my friends were barefoot. Some of them had, you kind of...you know, shoes that were opened up. You know, it just-- Clothing that was torn. They did whatever they could. My father, I guess, he was more imaginative than others. Was able to find us some, some warm clothing. Some, you know, coats and, and things kind of got a little steady. A little normal.

Interviewer: What was the food?

Greenblat: Basically brought in by American...the government. I mean, there were— everyday there would be, there would be trucks of, of food coming in. Into the camp. A, a lot of canned goods. A lot of pow--powdered milk was all over the place. It was just, you know, powdered, powdered milk. Powdered eggs. And that type of food is whatever was easy. There wasn’t a lot of cook--there was no place to cook. You know. They would go out and, I guess, make fire pits. And, and my mother went out and they would cook what—whatev--whatever they had. If they were able find a, you know, find a chicken and make some chicken soup. Or... Still tried to maintain that Jewish type of cooking. You know. But it was mainly ready to eat type powdered, canned, and boxed foods.

Interviewer: And bathing?

Greenblat: No such thing. Bathing-- They would get tubs, you know, metal tubs. And they would get... At the end of each barrack there was, I guess, either like latrines or whatever. And, and then there was, of course, water that was piped in. And they would get, you know, water. And they would try to heat it as best that they could. And they would just, my mother would just put us in a, in a tub. It was-- My, my sister Ethel who was an infant, and we would all bathe. And my mother would, would bathe us quite, quite regularly. I mean, this was, this was the thing that I

remember about my mom. My mom was only five feet tall. But nowhere would you find a stronger willed woman. Again, her main objective was her children. We...she loved us, and she took care of us, and it was, you know. She made sure that we had, we had, what, what--the best of whatever she could get for us. So... She made sure that we got our Jewish type education. Our Jewish heritage. She made sure that on, you know, if a holiday came by, we knew what the holiday was for. We knew-- It would try to get whatever food pertaining to that holiday for us. My mother was the most, as we grew up, the most fantastic cook that ever, you know. I guess every, every child says that their mother was a, a great cook. But she was. She was just, she was just unbelievable. I mean... Later on I can tell you some stories about how, what she did for Jewish American soldiers when we moved here. When my sister's became involved and started dating some Jewish soldiers. And what she, what she did for them as my sisters were dating and became friends with a lot of, specifically Jewish, soldiers from Fort Benning.

Interviewer: So, what was the, the sleeping arrangement in your small area that you had been defined for your family?

Greenblat: Ok. No sleeping arrangement. We all slept on the floor. I slept next to my father, and, and then my sisters slept on the, on the floor next, next to mom. And that was it. We slept on the floor as there was no, there was no furniture. There was nothing. I mean, this is basically where we lived. You know, in the mornings my mother would take whatever blankets or sheets we had and try to go wash them. And try to keep it as clean as possible. Almost everyday we were taken to an area and deloused. They would spray us with the delousing powder and make sure-- Cause there was a lot of lice infestation. There was a lot of, you know, just all kinds of critters. You know, crawling around in this. The American soldiers did whatever they could. Ok. There was a big presence of soldiers in the, in Beth Bialik. But they were, they were overwhelmed. Because there was just hundreds and thousands of people in that camp that were, you know, were, were homeless. I mean, this is--they had no other place to go. So, it was, you know, people on top of each other.

Interviewer: Was there some semblance of a community? Did you have, you know, a post office? Or a commissary?

Greenblat: Not, not, not in Beth Bialik. In Beth Bialik there was, there was no cohes-- cohesive type of... Because people came--people were coming and going. A lot of people left to see if they could find family members in other camps. There was so many, there was no-- No, I mean, one day, you know, I was playing with a kid and the next day he wasn't there. So, but no. Not in Beth Bialik. There was no cohesiveness, there was no-- Any sense of community whatsoever. People pretty much fended for themselves.

Interviewer: Did that come at the second DP Camp?

Greenblat: Yes.

Interviewer: And...

Greenblat: Very.

Interviewer: And when was that? And where was that?

Greenblat: About a year and a half later. I would say, you know, end of 1947. Something like that. We were, we were transferred. You know, and people were transferred, I guess, as they, as they came to Beth. To a, a camp called Beth Israel outside of a, in a town called Hallein. Which is about fifty miles east of Salzburg. And this particular camp, there were actual rooms. I think the room we were in is about the size of this room right here. Ok. But it had a door. It had a window. And, again, we still--very little furniture. No furniture. I remember a crib 'cause I was the only, I was the only boy so they had me in the crib 'cause, you know, when my mother would bathe they would--I would be able to face the wall. And my sis--both my sisters would stay on the floor with my mom and my father. Still slept on the floor. I remember that my dad... When he finally was able to make some money in whatever endeavors, and he did a lot of different things. You know. Actually bought a stove. A wood burning type stove that put up against the wall, and then it was vented outside the window. He was able to vent it. And on one side of the stove, I remember, was a, just an opening where you could boil water. Just pour water in there. And of course it would steam up, and then, and then it had, it had an area where my mom could cook. And he was one of the only ones in the camp that actually had a stove. Again, my dad was very self-sufficient. He, he did a lot of things. Again, his main purpose in life was to--was his family.

Interviewer: So was he dealing with maybe a black market...

Greenblat: Yes.

Interviewer: ...side of the camp?

Greenblat: Yes. Yes. He...

Interviewer: Or through the camp?

Greenblat: Outside the camp. There was an area in, in Hallein. I remember it was kind of a corner area in, in-- About four or five of he and his buddies would stand there and they would barter, or sell, or buy cigarettes from American soldiers and sell them to residents. And even jewelry and stuff like...saccharin.¹⁴ And stuff that was hard to get. And this was how he made his living. He bought himself a bicycle. And he would travel by bicycle from the DP Camp over to Hallein. And that's

¹⁴ Saccharin is an artificial sweetener.

that, you know. There was a beer garden off to the side. I remember the beer. I still remember the trees over this beer garden. Typical German type beer garden where they, where they sat and played cards, and drank beer. And, you know, I guess, did whatever they did as far as, as making money.

Interviewer: So, you said there was more community at this...

Greenblat: Definitely.

Interviewer: Talk about that.

Greenblat: Ok. Number one, there was two synagogues. There was, what they called--I guess--the big synagogue and the little synagogue. You know. The smaller synagogue was very, very ultra, ultra-orthodox. A lot of the people in, kind of went away from the ultra-orthodox type of living that their parents, that--as they grew up. So that smaller synagogue is where we went to Keter when we went to Hebrew school.¹⁵ And, you know, we just sat there with the rabbis, and, you know and reading, either reading chumasch, the Torah, or, you know, and, and learned whatever we could.¹⁶ And the big synagogue is where everybody kind of went, and, you know, and had their Friday nights and, and, and, and Shabbat, Shabbat services on, on Saturday. The camp basically closed down Friday afternoon. A lot of the people that, you know, had a...occupation or had a trade. If you were, if you, if you were a shoemaker you would open--you opened up, you-- There was one barrack that they opened up small areas like a market. And if you were a shoemaker you opened up your own little shoe shop. Or a baker, you know, your, your own bakery shop, you know. A tailor, you know, repairing or making clothes. And so it, it kind of became a community where people started, you know. Across the hall from us, Mr. and Mrs. Shapiro--friends of ours--he was the camp barber. He was the only barber in the camp. I mean, there was lines, and lines of people trying to get in to, you know, and-- He had a chair in his, in his room, like this. And, you know, he was the barber. He lived right across the hall from us. Kids running, I mean. Kids running around all over. I mean, there was hundreds of children my age, you know, five, six, seven, you know, eight years old. You know, we would go to Keter. We would--the government, the American government, had a, a school that they were trying to teach us some English. That didn't go over very, very well. A lot of kids just didn't go. You know. Life kind of started settling down. I mean, one of my biggest, oddest memory is the mass circumcision that was performed in the camp. A lot of the children during the war, they were born during the war, or before the war. Were, did not, you know, didn't have their Bris.¹⁷ You know, parents were afraid, you know, to circumcise their children. So what happened, these four and

¹⁵ Keter is the sublime level of divine emanation, and is the topmost of the Sephirot of the Tree of Life in Kabbalah. Because it is sublime, it is incomprehensible to man.

¹⁶ The chumasch is a Torah in printed form compared to scroll form.

¹⁷ A Brit Milah, or Bris, is the Jewish ceremony of circumcision. This is usually performed on the baby's eighth day of life.

five year old boys were taken and wrapped in a tallis, a tallit, and put on a long table inside the synagogue.¹⁸ And the mohel would go down, would just go down the aisle, and say the prayers.¹⁹ And actually perform the circumcision on these, on these boys. And, and then they would of course do the--they had the glass of wine, you know, the prayer over the wine. And I, I was right behind them with my father. And I would, I remember, cause I had, I was circumcised inside, inside the cave. My, my-- There was a mohel. One of the--my father's best friends was a mohel. And so I had the pleasure of being circumcised when I was seven days old. Didn't have to go through that. But I was right behind my dad. And I would start drinking some. And I got a little tipsy. Remember my dad carrying me over to the infirmary. And it was--I was very, very sick. But just something that happened. And a lot of my friends for days after that were in so much pain. That their, you know, little member was wrapped in gauze, and... My best friend...his name was Chayy--Chayyim Minzagorski. He was, he lived in the barracks across from us. And he, he was one of the kids that had to have the protective-- And he, he was in so much pain. And he would try to go, you know, to the bathroom. And he would go to the side of the--and I would have to wait for him--and he would just cry as he was trying to pee. So this, this was the life in the camp. Basically we would just, we would kind of-- The kids would just run wherever they wanted to. We would go to the play areas behind the school. We would, you know, there was-- If you went outside the camp, there was a, a big lake where you could go swimming. You know. On, on Saturday afternoons...the main--where the main gate of the camp was--it was kind of a, a little bit of a hill. And people would take their blankets and put it up on that hill on Saturday during the summer. And they would bring their-- People would go and have their picnics and whatever. And, you know, they would try to get their lives back in, in order. Waiting to leave, and everybody wanted to go to Israel. Everybody wanted to go to Israel. And the back log of people, and thousands of people in the camp. I mean, there was no way that everybody was gonna, you know, especially the, you know... Immigration to Israel was pretty much blocked. So we just-- I mean we lived there from 1947 till, till, till we left in October of, of 1950.

Interviewer: So, when did the possibility of going to the United States instead--when did that become...apparent?

Greenblat: Ok. And I don't know exactly when. Either 1947/48. The International Relief Organization... The United States and Austria had... And I have some papers that were, that were actually sent to me from the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. These were, these were papers giving us permission to apply to come to the United States. My... They came into the camp and basically, you know, they set up an office where the American soldiers, the comman--the commandant or the commander of the camp or whatever. And said, "Anybody that wants to go to the

¹⁸ A tallit is a fringed garment (prayer shawl) typically worn by Jewish men, but can also be worn by Jewish women. It serves as a reminder of the duties and obligations of being a Jew.

¹⁹ A mohel is trained in the ritual and procedures of circumcision.

United States, sign up.” And my dad wasn’t home. He was doing whatever he was doing. My mom went ahead and signed up. She, you know... What she says, she didn’t think that they--she thought they were kidding. This was not really happening. We did sign up, and about six, six/seven months later, we were given our permission slips. We were taken, our medical tests. And whatever tests that they did. And...in... Yom Kippur, the night of, Kol Nidrei Night, in 19--in 1949, we were given all of our papers and basically just told to wait.²⁰ And that they would tell us, you know, when our, the next step was. Which was gonna be, we were gonna be transported to Bremerhaven, Germany, to, you know, embarkation. Put on a ship for the United States.

Interviewer: And can you tell me about that, that ship? That trip?

Greenblat: It-- In Octo--in early October of 1950--that’s how long it took--almost a year, a year after we were given. We left the camp. And I remember the first time I ever rode in a car. And we were, there was a, a big black car and about four or five families. It was like cars lined up. And we left the camp. And with, you know, whatever suitcases we had. And taken to a train station in Salzburg, Austria. And we got on the train and left Salzburg. Took about, it took about a day trip on that train. Going through Germany to Bremerhaven. And this was another memory that I have is looking out the windows and the total, total destruction. There was not a building that was whole. And, you know, as I was looking out the window on my way to Bremerhaven. We were put in a holding camp in Bremerhaven. My mother was put in one, one...barrack. More like a campus is what it looked like. And then my dad and I were in another one. And we were there for about a week and a half. And on the sixteenth of November of 1950, we boarded the U.S.S. General Belleau. Which was a converted type army transport ship. And, again, my mother and my sisters--cause they had these stacked type bunks—you know like you, you’d see the navy type, where they... Naval people would just sleep on these. So, so that’s what we had. I was in a top bunk, and my father was in a bunk right below me. My father was able to get a job in the commissary on the ship. So we had, we had, you know, pretty good food. And they had, they had places for kids to play. And, and then my mother and my sisters were in another part of the ship. And, crossing the North Atlantic took--that was, again, on the sixteenth of November of 1950. And two nights before Thanksgiving we got into the port of New York. And I remember my, my father waking me up real early in the morning one night. Just... He came and got me. Said, “There’s, there’s something,” just telling me in Yiddish, there’s something I need...that he wanted me to see. And I said, “Ok.” So I went up there I guess, 1950. I was, I was not quite nine years old. And I went up on, on deck with my father and it was really very, very cold, I remember. And when--that was my first sight, or my, of the Statue of Liberty. And it was, my father and I just stood there and as the ship was docking into, into New York. Into Ellis Island. And, and again, my memory goes back, looking at my dad. And looking at, you know. Did I know

²⁰ Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year, when Jews are closest to G-d and the soul. Kol Nidrei is the first communal prayer service of Yom Kippur that takes place before sunset.

what I was looking at? I don't know. But it was just, it just an awesome feeling. And then you could, you know, you could look off and see these, see these humungous skyscrapers. It was just like, it was like, it was like, you know, something out of a, a movie, you know. And actually I saw an--not only my dad--but others that were at the rail crying, and just, just sobbing at, at, at what they were looking at.

Interviewer: So, what did the United States mean to you at that age?

Greenblat: At that point, the United States didn't mean--I'll be honest with you--didn't mean much to me. It was just a destination. There was, you know-- In my, in my younger life, there was so many destinations. You know. It was different. It was, again, just as a child looking at this vast, you know, array of buildings, and so. It was just, again, just a destination. You know we had so many destinations. So many different times that we were moving from back and forth. So...We got-- Now at Ellis, when we got off the ship at Ellis Island. And I mean...if you ever been there, just a big open area. And we were like, we had to wait, we were processed through and, and given, you know, coffee or milk or, you know. All the red, there was more red-cross people hovering around, you know, trying to make people comfortable. 'Cause, you know, be carrying our bags. And just, you know. I mean everybody was used to being herded ar...you know, around. I mean, for the, for the past five or six years that's all, you know, you know. We would go where we were told to go. That type of thing. And, and, and...so it...I remember, you know, getting don...first time I'd ever had a donut. I remember the donuts. And, you know, and, and milk. And, and, we were given a kind of a little rectangular box. A big red-cross insignia on it. And inside was some stuff that, I guess, the school kids in the United States--that was the big thing back then--was for them to prepare these red-cross boxes for immigrants coming in. And mine had a, had a wash, a, a, a white wash cloth. A small tube of Colgate toothpaste. A toothbrush. First time I'd ever seen a toothbrush. And a roll of five flavored life savers. That was inside my red-cross box.

Interviewer: So did you change your name at this point?

Greenblat: At this point is... According to, according to my original Green card my, my name was still Grischa Grinblat. Spelled, I guess, phonetically. G-R-I-N-B-L-A-T. I'm assuming that when we got to Ellis Island, and the, they asked our names--and again I have some, some papers on the manifest from the ship--that, you know my, they asked my dad, you know. He said "Grinblat." Like in his Polish type--So, so they spelled it G-R-I-N-B-L-A-T. You know. And that's what they put on our, our Green cards. So that was...and, that, that initial Green card later on in my life was gonna be a big hassle for me. The original Green card. But, no, our names were, were not, you know. My sister's Ann was Alta. A-L-T-A. Eth--my sister Ethel was actually Ethel, so. And my mother was Manya, and my father was, was Abraham. He...on our, on our Green cards. And then we left. We left Ellis Island that afternoon. And we, you know. Originally we were supposed to

go to--we were sponsored by the welfare federation, the IRO or International Relief Organization--out of the, out of the state of Indiana.²¹ And we were looking at my documentation. Someone crossed out the address in Indiana on the bottom of our paperwork, and put Atlanta, Georgia. Why and how, my father could never explain. He-- Explanation that we were given later on is that the immigration quota for Indiana or New Castle, Indiana--where we were supposed to go--had closed off. Or they weren't accepting anymore immigrants, or whatever. So we were put on a train for Atlanta, Georgia. That, that morning after we were processed through Ellis Island, and we were on our way to Atlanta.

Interviewer: And you ran through the station in D.C. Washington, D.C.

Greenblat: That's correct. We-- That night we were taken off the train in Washington, in Union Station. Very, very late, late at night. And this is they day--now the day before Thanksgiving of 1950. And, you know, the five of us. My mom holding Ethel, and my dad holding my hand, and my, my sister Ann's hand. Trying to figure out where to go. None of us spoke any English. There wasn't anybody. Again, the sight of this train station in, in Washington was just humongous. Really. And there was a group of soldiers not far from where we were standing. And for some reason one of them walked over to us. I guess, they could reco--he would recognize we were immigrants. I mean, the way we were dressed. And I was still in my German, you know, lederhosen, and whatever jacket I had.²² And my sisters were, you know, dressed in the little checkered--looked like, they looked like little checkerboards--dresses. They had, they had my mother had made. They both, you know, looked alike. And this young Jewish soldier walks over to us. Well I say Jewish, we find out. And he spoke Yiddish to my--he spoke to my dad and was able to finally--he looked at our papers, my father's papers, and was able, you know, to get us on the right train. And he had a big bag of tangerines. First time I'd ever seen a tangerine. And he took some tangerines out of the, out of the bag [coughs] and gave one to me. Gave one to my sisters. And, and he also somehow or other--out of his pocket--had brand new fifty cent pieces. And he gave all three of us a brand new fifty cent. I still have mine. Asked my sister awhile back what she did with hers. Oh, she said she spent it a long time ago. But I still have mine. I still, you know, carry it with me at times. Just to, just to remind me. And he put us on the train. And the next, the next night we were, we... About three or four o'clock in the afternoon we came into Atlanta terminal station in downtown. And we sat there on the train. We, you know. The train stopped. I mean, I guess if the train had a different destination than Atlanta, we would have gone on. We didn't know we were in Atlanta, but we just. So for about two and a half hours we sat there. And there was nobody on the train, just us. And finally a gentleman from the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Federation came on the train and said, "We've been looking for you." You know, you know. He introduced himself and got us off the train. And, and we got in a

²¹ The International Refugee Organization (IRO) provided assistance to refugees and displaced persons from 1946-1952.

²² Lederhosen are traditional German breeches made of leather that are knee-length.

car with him. And took us to the--there's a hotel. The Jefferson Hotel. It's right across the street from Superior Court in Atlanta. And I remember we were on the fifth floor in the corner. Corner room of the Jefferson Hotel. There's the five of us--one bed. And there was a, there was an actual inside. First time we'd ever been in a, in a room where the bathroom was actually, you know, inside the room. And we were there for about two and a half weeks. And then they were able to find us a permanent residence with a family. Jewish family. I guess they volunteered to take immigrants into, into their homes. And the particular family we were with had an apartment upstairs from where they-- They lived in a, a two story apartment upstairs. You had a separate entrance on Capitol Avenue right where the-- Across the street from where Atlanta-Fulton County stadium is...was. And that was on a Friday. That was on a Friday afternoon. And I remember we were on the front porch. Mrs. Goldwasser, the lady-- Her, Mr. and Mrs. Goldwasser and their son Willy were there. And a truck drove up with our, our big wooden crates that came over, I guess, from, from Austria with us. And my dad opened up the crate and the one thing that my mother was able to bring with her from Austria that she bought, was of course her silver Shabbat candelabra. And she was about to go upstairs and light, you know, Shabbat candles. And Mrs. Goldwasser brought up a big tray of...chicken. You know, baked chicken. A pot of chicken soup and the biggest chocolate cake you ever saw. I said, "Boy, this was--if this is what America is, then, you know." So the Goldwassers of course for years. Mrs. Goldwasser and my mom, they were about the same age. Were just *the* best of friends. Willy and I grew up together. Willy is, was a year younger than me. He was a typical spoiled--little spoiled kid--American kid. They were one of the first people in the neighborhood to have a television. And, at, at the time if, if Willy felt like he, he wanted to have company he would, he, he came to the, came by our, came up the stairs and he would sin "motorola TV." You know that we were, we were invited to come down and watch TV. We were, you know, the Lone Ranger, and, you know. It was, it was just something. And the Monday after, the Monday after we, we got there, Mrs. Goldwasser took, took me and put about as good of clothes as we had. And got me dressed. My sister Ann dressed. And Ethel of course was still an infant. So... And, and walked us about four and a half blocks down Capitol Avenue to James L. Key Elementary School. And we were met at the front door by Mrs. Cates who was the principal. And Mrs. Goldwasser handed her, handed her some sort of papers. Again, and at that time, that's the first time I remember my name was changed to Hershel. And my sister was changed to Ann. And that, you know, in our school records, that was our, you know. Later on in life--well just a couple years ago--I, I needed to get my school records to try to get my naturalization certificate. And it, it said on my school, all my school records from grammar school through high school said Hershel Greenblat. Spelled the way I'm spelling it now. So this is where I believe our names, our names were changed. Was, was in grammar school by Mrs. Cates.

Interviewer: How did you learn to speak English?

Greenblat: At the time, there were two Jewish teachers at James L. Key. A Mrs. Rice, who was teaching fourth grade. And that's where I was supposed to be was in the fourth grade. She, and again, I remember meeting her sitting in Mrs. Cates, in the office. And meeting Mrs. Rice, and I didn't understand, basically didn't understand, you know, what they were saying. But Mrs. Rice did not want to take the responsibility of teaching me. She didn't want to. There was also another--a young teacher--who was teaching her first, that was her first year teaching. And, she was teaching third grade. And her name was Marsha Fitterman. And like I said, it was her first year teaching. And she told Mrs. Cates that she would go ahead and take me into her class. And she's the one that sat with me, and taught me how to, you know--started me out with the ABC type books. And it didn't really, you know, I mean, you know, didn't take long. And, and, and my relationship with the other kids in the class. I learned how to speak English fairly, fairly quickly.

Interviewer: And your father eventually opened a store in the Buttermilk Bottom neighborhood. Is that right?

Greenblat: Ok. My-- After we moved in with Mr. and Mrs. Goldwasser, my father was given a job through the Jewish Welfare Federation. By a company called the London Iron and Metal Company. Which was owned by the Feldman family. And, I mean, through the years Feldman's--I mean they were probably one of the biggest contributors to Jewish life in Atlanta. I mean, if you go to the museum, the Breman. Their names are all over, you know, so. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Feldman gave my dad a job. Basically as a, an, an assistant to one of the drivers. And they went all over town, you know, collecting scrap metal, bringing it in for reprocessing. And my dad would come home just filthy, I mean, you know, you know he looked like he'd been crawling through all kinds of mud and stuff. But there was one afternoon, the truck that he was riding in was sideswiped by a car or something. And he, my dad, hurt his back very, very badly. And he was out of work for like...months. And of course couldn't go back to, to work there. So, I guess at that point, Mr. Feldman cosigned a loan at the, at a bank--at the bank. First National Bank of Atlanta. I remember that well because my job--every month to get on the bus and take the payments to the bank for that, for that loan. That was, that was my job. And, you know. And so my dad bought a very, very small neighborhood type grocery store. Was basically in the bottom of a, a residence. It was, you know, wasn't very big. The entrance, you had a small little produce section, and the general groceries, canned goods, and the counter with the register. And then you had the meat market, and then the stock room in the back. It was very, very small. And he bought that in 19--that was in 1952. When my dad bought that store and basically served that community from 1952-1969.

Interviewer: Who were some of his customers?

Greenblat: Pardon me.

Interviewer: Who were some of his, his customers?

Greenblat: Most of, of course-- Buttermilk Bottom was a, a ghetto area. So, totally, you know, black area. You know. Dilapidated buildings. You know. I remember one day--he was telling me that this young kid came in and--to the store--and tried to, you know, and steal some produce, or steal some food or something. And my dad would, you know, stopped him and asked him, why, you know, why he was stealing. And, you know, the kid said, well he was hungry. I mean, you know, and so my dad, you know, told him, you know, "if you're hungry, you don't, don't, you don't have to steal. Just, you know, ask me. I'll be more than happy to make you a sandwich. You know, you know, you know, whatever you need." And, and then he--my dad--got the reputation in the neighborhood of offering credit. He had what they, it was a, it was a big grey book. It was a ledger type book that he bought. And families would come, you know, during, you know they would, they would send their children with a note. And that's how my dad kind of learned how to speak and read English. Some of these notes from these families of what they needed. And he would fill the order. And then he would put the name in the, in the book. And then like a Friday, Friday afternoon or Saturday he had this long list of what everybody owed him. And they would either come in Friday afternoon or Saturday and pay him off for that week. And that's how, that's how he made his living, for, you know, for so many years. You know, he became well known. You know, that was--he was Mr. Abe. And, so he-- This is, this is, this is how, you know, he made his living. Learned how to speak broken English. And...

Interviewer: And one of his, one of his customers was Dr. King?

Greenblat: Not so much a customer. Dr. King walked in one afternoon to his store. It was Ebenezer Baptist Church where Dr. King of course was a pastor. Just about four and a half, five blocks south of the, of the store. And Dr. King walked in and introduced himself. And he and my dad, you know--my dad--Dr. King I guess learned of my dad's reputation of what he, he was doing. And, and, I mean, I'll be vain and say my dad was so loved by the community. He was--it was, it was just a sight to see. I mean, you know, how the, how the people just flocked to him. And he never had a, he never had any, any incidents, you know. Any instance of anybody trying to rob-- He was there from 1952 to 1969. And never in that time did anybody try to rob him. And Dr. King came in, introduced himself. And they had long discussions. Dr. King asked a lot of questions of my dad. And they had discussions about human rights. And about what my dad went through. And his-- You know, I sat, sometimes I would sit in, in, you know, the corner and listen to their conversations. And I tried to sometimes interpret from what I could.

Interviewer: And, and your mother's cooking? Her get togethers?

Greenblat: This was, again, this was-- I, and they, you know, sixty-seven... I was married in 1964 to my wife Rochelle. Then my sister started through the USO type situations.²³ They would drive over to Fort Benning, in Columbus. And, I guess, yeah it is Fort Benning. And they would--they had dances and parties. You know, through the kind of a Jewish organization. Through the Jewish community center. And my sister Ann met a, a lieutenant Herman Perlman. And my sister Ethel met... Herman, called him Perl. He was, he was from the Bronx. Typical, you know, Bronx. He was, he was, you know-- I could tell you more stories about my, my brother-in-law Perl. That this guy was just the most unbelievable human being. The nicest, the sweetest person. You know, just, just left us way, way, way too early. And my sister Ethel met Stewart Grossman, who was a lieutenant from Monmouth, New Jersey. And so they, they invited the two of them for a--we always had, before we went to-- We always went Friday night services. My father sometimes couldn't go because the store would stay open late. He would wait for customers to come and pay him. But my mother made sure that, we walked over to the synagogue. Shearith Israel synagogue a couple blocks away. So for Friday night services. And then of course we had Shabbat dinner. And so Ann and Ethel invited Stewart and Perl for Friday night dinner. Cause, you know, we had our typical-- My mother would make the gefilte fish, and chicken soup, and the baked chicken. Sometime there was a brisket. And she would bake her—she, she made the most fantastic, like a pound cake. And, and her apple strudels. I mean, this was, this was her, this was her thing. This was her, I mean, all day, you know all day long she, she scrubbed the floors and made sure the Shabbat was Shabbat. What it, what it was meant to be. You know, I would come home from school. You could, you could-- A block away you could smell the, you know, the cooking. So they came over for Shabbat dinner. And of course I think both Perl and Stewart fell in love with my mom before they fell in love with my sisters. And so, and then the follow—the, the following week, Perl, you know, asked Ann if he could bring a couple of his buddies for Shabbat dinner. And of course my mom said “just bring whoever you want to bring.” You know-- We lived in an apartment on North Highland Avenue. The main room was this small dining area and then the big--the building we lived in was a, was actually a small converted church. It was real high ceilings. Big long room. So my mom would take the table out of the kitchen, and, and would put the-- extend it to the table in the dining room. And just make it so that-- Perl asked if he could bring some of his friends. You know, some of his other Jewish buddies, for, for dinner. And my mom said, “sure, bring them.” And it got to the point--at some point--there were twenty to twenty-five soldiers in my mom's home on a Friday night. My mom would-- My dad would furnish the, the turkeys. He would, he would, he would order kosher turkeys from a kosher empire distributing. And he--she would cook a couple turkeys. A brisket. A roast. I mean, there was food all over the place every Friday night for, for, for months. And then both Stewart and Perl were sent to Vietnam and, in 1968. And then, when they came home, Stewart-- Perl came home first and proposed. He actually

²³ The United Services Organization (USO) provided live entertainment to United States service members and their families.

proposed in a letter while he was in Vietnam to my sister Ann. And they were gonna marry in late December of 1969. So Ann was planning this big wedding, you know. It was just gonna be this beautiful wedding. All of Perl's family. And then about-- While in the, in the planning stages my, my brother-in-law Stewart came home from Vietnam. And he and Ethel wanted to get married too. And my mother said, "Well, I can't, you know, I can't afford two big weddings." And so they came up with the idea of...having a double wedding. So, the day-- About a week before the wedding they had the--everything was planned. They were gonna go up there together and have this big, you know, big wedding. And the rabbi at Shearith Israel synagogue informed my parents that according to Jewish tradition, two sisters could not get married on the same day. So what they, what they came up with, was that my sister Ann who was gonna get married first. She got married before sundown. Then they had this big kind of reception or, you know, not a reception but like hors d'oeuvres and stuff. And right after sundown people went back into the sanctuary and then my sister Ethel got married. So they got married, and then had the big... Perl opened up his own plumbing company here in Atlanta. In 1992, contracted colon cancer. I guess from his whatev-- And he went to the VA hospital, of course. And he passed away there. Didn't get very good treatment--I don't think--but you know. And my brother-in-law, Stewart, passed away from a, from a heart attack. But he passed away after, actually after my sister Ethel died. So that's how my mother treated people, you know. It just, it was just-- She was, again, the most loving, you can just picture. Like I said, she's five feet tall, you know, it just strong, loving, just-- You know, when she, she walked with a bad limp. You know, with her, her--after her leg was wounded. You know, you know, sometimes when she wore a, a bathing suit--we would go to the beach over at Callaway--and you could see the big scar on her leg. So.

Interviewer: When you think about your family today, your children and grandchildren, and your--what your parents went through. How does that make you feel?

Greenblat: You know, I look...at my sister Ann. We'll go her. She and Perl had two sons. David, who is now a doctor. Dr. David Perlman. He works for the state of New Jersey as a medical ethics professor. He, he works, I guess with the medical, medical people determining, you know, who gets medical type treatments or whatever. What he's contributed, he's, again, a very caring human being. Very, you know, just, you know-- He's married to a girl. The young lady that he married, Chrissy, is the head nurse at C.H.O.P.S. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. My nephew, Mitch, their youngest son who is--he is a IT--some large financial company downtown Atlanta. They have two, two fantastic young kids. And, so, I look at these--my nephews--and what they have become. My sister Ethel, her son Harold is a, works as a senior vice president with Verizon customer service. What he has become. I mean, I married, I had two sons. I look at my son, Jeff, you know. Who is, he--senior vice president with a large food distributor up in Connecticut. What he's done with his life. And my son Jacob who is a, works for a large food company called Super Saver. They own all the save-a-lot type small grocery stores. He travels all over the south--quality control.

You know, he makes sure the stores are up to par, 'cause these are franchise owners. Then my son Jeff has--he and my ex daughter-in-law—yeah, three children. My granddaughter Erin, who is now twenty-six years old and teaches high school Spanish in Charleston, South Carolina. My grandson Eddie just got married about a year ago. At one--went to--graduated from Ohio State, Magna Cum Laude. And is, just he and Emily just moved down from New York. He wanted to try the improv comedy type. That's what he did a lot of at Ohio State. But now I think he feels he's growing up, and going back to law school. He just got accepted to Emory Law School. And Emily teaches, got a job with Gwinnett County Schools. Gonna teach special ed. She's a special ed-- Teaches special ed, teaches special needs children at a school over off of, in Buford. Then my grandson, Corey, just graduated from Clay High School up in Toledo, Ohio where my son Jeff and Susie divorced. But, Corey was valedictorian, president of the senior class. Tremen--you know--was offered a full ride scholarship to play soccer at Ohio State. But accepted an academic scholarship to Ohio State. And, you know, is gonna proceed a, you know, a degree, a law degree. He wants, you know, he's gonna major in international, international business and get a, you know... So...you know what, what my parents went through, you know. My father lost his whole family. He lost fifteen sisters. His mother, his father, brother-in-laws, cousins. Everybody were killed, were killed at Majdanek right after my dad escaped Lublin. He found out that they were all taken. The whole Jewish population pretty much of the, of the town of Lublin were taken to Majdanek, which is outside of Lublin, and, and gassed. My mother, again, her family, her brothers, and her parents were taken to outside of Kiev at Babi Yar-- where they were made to dig their own graves. And were lined up and shot in the back of the head. So what they went through, my father was determined when he escaped, you know, out of, out of Poland. And he and my mother fought and, you know, did whatever they could in resistance. And were determined that their family was just not gonna, you know, become a, a statistic, or become a victim. And, you know, got us to safe-- Got us to the United States. I was able to grow up. Go to school. You know, get married. Have children. Have grandchildren. And, you know, there was six million Jews--just because they were Jews--were not given that opportunity. Because one man decided that a group of people-- because of their religion--were not worthy of living. And--but my father was not gonna be part of that six million. I felt that he gave me the opportunity to have a family. And, and in turn able to contribute, you know. I mean, I contributed as being a, you know, a salesman for over forty years. You know, and I, I now speak at the Holocaust museum. And just want to make sure that the kids today don't forget what happened.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mr. Greenblat.

Cameraman: Cut.