**Max Pila (1920-1999)
Survivor of Auschwitz, Birkenau, Nazi Death March
Oral History interview with R.D. Moses,
May 12, 1996**

*Polish-born Max Pila, his wife Rosa, and her son Harry, survived the Holocaust and in the early 1950s forged a new life in Fort Worth. Beloved by Sunday school students, Max worked in the catering department at Congregation Ahavath Sholom. After “Holocaust: the mini-series” aired on national TV in 1978, he began to speak openly about the hell he had endured under the Nazis. In this oral history he describes his upbringing in a small Polish village, how he witnessed the hanging of a brother, the inhumane work details at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazi Death March in the snow, and his happy marriage to Rosa in Belgium after the war. In 1922, his stepson Harry Pila, who lives in New Jersey, wrote the memoir, The Journey of a Hidden Child, which is available through Amazon from Amsterdam Publishers.*

RD Moses:

Max Pila Oral History May 12, 1996, with interviewer R.D. Moses and Fay Brachman. RD Moses: I'll ask you questions and you answer.

Max Pila:

Are the questions simple?

RD Moses:

Very simple.

Max Pila:

Understandable.

RD Moses:

Take your time. Yes.

Max Pila:

Okay.

RD Moses:

I'll guarantee to help you. . . This is May the 12th, 1996. We're going to interview Mr. Max Pila, formerly from Europe, who came over here right after the Holocaust. Max, where were you born in Europe?

Max Pila:

Born in Poland, in a very small town. They called themselves Zalv, Z A L V . [When transliterated, the name of the town is Zelow or Zelov.]

RD Moses:

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Max Pila:

Okay. let me start off. Mother, was very religious; father was not religious. I got four brothers. . . . I got four brothers, two sisters when the... Whatever you call it. The Holocaust... Or the war broke open. Also, my grandfather was still alive with a very white beard (moves his hands in front of himself to gesture). He was involved also in the Holocaust. The first brother, Meinz, he was thirteen years old. He was picked up in the street. His name was Moisha Aaron. And they was saying, they said, "In three... months... he gonna come back." He never came back.

RD Moses:

Who picked him up the Poles or Deutsch [Germans]?

Max Pila:

Well... let me tell you how it was. The Nazis or the Gestapo round up the people in the street, like in the old time [in Texas] when they round up the cattle. The first thing, what happened when it [the Jewish neighborhood] was took over [and turned into the ghetto], wherever the people was living, are out in the front streets . . . [where people were visible] in seeing windows, and seeing peopl. They were moved out. The windows has to be taped with paper. You couldn't go anymore in the front street. Whatever they call it, they call it a "ghetto." Food was not allowed to go buying anymore. First of all, you took away the citizen.

You were no more a citizen anymore. You were... A vegetable. You couldn't go outside. You couldn't go inside. You couldn't go buying. You couldn't go shopping. You couldn't go working. The thing [a large room] . . . in the ghetto was made a kitchen, and everybody came for this little bit of soup. Whatever you could get until you go home, you maybe can heat up, get, until you go back in the ghetto. The hunger started off very big and very poor and very pitiful... For all the brothers and me. I was round up in the same way in 1940. I was round up in the street, just like cattle.

They sent me up one day to the Łódź ghetto. I was one day in the Łódź ghetto and then transferred to Auschwitz.

Fay Brachman:

How old were you Max?

Max Pila:

Nineteen years old. And the brothers and the sisters was younger and younger and younger. I came in the Łódź ghetto. I was one day. . . .(Stops. looks down, with tears in his eyes. Takes a breath)

Fay Brachman:

Take your time.

Max Pila:

[there is a significant pause here as Max nods] And I was sent to Auschwitz. Auschwitz was in this time, [filled with prisoners from] all the nations. I would say Poles, all kind of Jews , in all, all the way around Europe. In 1940 Auschwitz became only a Jewish concentration camp. Took up all the nation. 'Cause they figured out some Jews, they have maybe a little bit gold, maybe they have a little bit, this to exchange for a potato, a piece of bread or whatever. Auschwitz became mainly Jewish concentration camp. This was in 1940. Later on, I got some people, they came from the same little town and I asked- because we didn't got any communication, nothing. I asked, "what happened to Zalv? Where is all the Jews from Zalv? The answer was, "They took them out to the cemetery. They digged themselves the graves and shot [them] up. . . . [inaudible] "

Fay Brachman:

Let me interrupt you. How many Jews lived in Zalv?

Max Pila:

About five or six thousand Jews. It was a very little town, but still had lots of Jews-

RD Moses:

Were most of the people...Jewish in that town or not Jewish?

Max Pila:

Yeah, but for example, when I, when I was still in Poland right away, uh, [Hermann] Goerring, he was the whole big macher. He start standing around ....go pointing...and he go from town to town...And he hang a million Yidden, a million Jews. Around the hanging, the Poles has got a very big picnic, 'cause the Poles was the biggest antisemites. 'Cause you couldn't find not one concentration camp anywhere else but in Poland. Not in Germany. Not in Yugoslavia. Not in Romania. (Gradually raising his voice...) Not in Hungary. Not in France. Not in Belgium. Not in Luxembourg. (Pounding twice on the table) Nowhere. Only in Poland. This was the place what was then like the Messiah. Just like the Messiah.

Okay. When I find out my family is not alive, I find out one brother was in another camp. He was hungry. He went steal a potato somewhere off...they catched him. But steal, a potato was hanging. This was the punishment, hanging. They didn't say he was hungry, he stole.

The whole concentration camp that was in this place must stay and look at it [the hanging], including me. . . . He was about 16 years old.

RD Moses:

So you saw your brother?

Max Pila:

Shamshi was that one brother. What I can say? . . . . Now in this time in the years was no TV. It was not as much communication. People didn't know it. People didn't know it. In Belgium and in Poland, there was a very strong organization. The Bund [organized Jewish trade union]. Very strong. They went to Britain and they told them [the atrocities going on in Poland] and they brought them pictures, with everything together. This is happening now in Poland concentration camp, we're slaughtering, we're hanging... Crematorium alive. They said the answer, "We cannot help you. It's a racial problem." They cannot help, the Red Cross. The International [Red Cross] came to Auschwitz. They didn't go where the crematorium is. They didn't go where the hunger is. They didn't go where the slaughter is. They went to the Gestapo to look them in the eyes. The Red Cross, I never give one penny in my life. They said, "It's a racial problem. We cannot help you."

Around the world, when Hitler took over in 1939, ships went all around and all over and all edges. Nobody let them [Jewish refugess] in. Nobody. Where they went, [they] were sent back. Sweden, Switzerland, whatever, the United States. The United States lowered the quota to 1%, for example, when the war was breaking out. People supposed to live in there, in there, in there. The quota came up, took away for four years. When the war was over, these people went to concentration camp. Our United States, same thing. The whole world has blood on their hands, ...Jewish blood.

Our life was in a concentration camp. We wake up in three o'clock in the morning. Could be winter, could be summer, can go on forever... If one god forrbid , would get escape of it. [Inaudibl] you were punished. The punishment was death. No other way. The day breaked off, I would say with hunger with such a piece of bread (makes a gesture with his fingers showing a small size) This piece of bread was for a whole day. You went to work. I was working in a coal mine. A coal mine is very hard to work. Where the coals are is very low. Oh, before you get into the coals, it starts the building like a street. The road's gone.

We didn't get anything [no sheets or blankets] to put up bed. We didn't got any shoes. We didn't got any nothing. The only thing where we covered our body a little bit, it was [empty] sacks in concrete, up in cement of a river. We covered that bed a little bit, 'cause the stone was dripping. No shoes. No bread. Hunger. What it was the day. When you came home from the coal mine, you were very hungry. You went hungry to it and you came home hungry. They called it soup. So the put a kettle in the middle. You couldn't find anything [in the soup] except water. We were hungry. We were weak. We couldn't keep it. One start pushing the other one in. Fell up. When it happened, the other one. The punishment was take away the kettle. You don't get nothing. Hunger. Uh, an example, the next day or whatever, it didn't change. It didn't change today. It didn't change tomorrow. It didn't change my five years.

Treatments. There was no anything. You couldn't go to a doctor, it didn't exist for Jews. It is not any, anything. What? You got headache or whatever. It was some people, no bathrooms, no washing, lice.

Wherever you could find your body sleeping. One press by the other one, like a herring, I, he got this interior. He got typhus. Nobody did care. They were laying together. Everyday was a one guy. (Adolph) Eichmann, uh, every day was a guy, Eichmann. He went around in all the concentration camps and make the selection. "You, you, you." But they get about 3000 to 4000 crematorium. The crematorium was built where they said a "shower room." A "shower room!" It's what not in that gas in it. Even to kill you, just to mix it up your mind. You went alive in the crematorium. . . . . the smoke went maybe up to the seventh heaven. This stink. The fire. Nobody don't want to help us. We were in it.

R.D. Moses: Let me interrupt you. How did you survive all the years in the camp?

Max Pila:

Let me tell you. Surviving. If we gonna say it is no God. There is no devil. There is nothing. The question goes around, when I come in the United States,... most of them in, in European countries, even if you were not in Poland, I didn't go back to Poland because of why I'm gonna go to stinking Poland? Even if went back, a Jew away after the war, they killed them anyway. "You still alive?!" Cause they killed millions. Poland got three and a half million Jews. 2000 survived. How I survived? Let me tell you what the story is. I am very stubborn in my life. I said to myself, I wanna see the end. (Max pounds on the table as he says this.) I'm not gonna eat any garbage. I never smoked. I took the piece of bread in the morning. I ate it up. When it's in my stomach, nobody can take it out anymore. And the very most important thing, it was not to get a beating. Stay away from a beating.

One, stay away from beating. Work. Do the best what you can. It was the only thing where we were lucky, and I was lucky. I didn't see my brothers, my parents how they suffering. They were dead. The only son, a brother, but it was, he was hanged. I saw him, miserable stuff. I was very happy about it. I didn't see nobody see dead. Involved in it between me, the brothers or the parents. All right.

Uh, I went, I got sick in the coal mine because the water was dripping, and I got paralyzed on one side. I couldn't take care of myself. I couldn't anything doing what I supposed to doing, working in. The only thing what I did, I said, "No, this is not the end for me. I got to go on." It took me maybe about two or three months. It took me, and I start getting a little better. Little by little. I started off somehow to get an arm...(he raises one arm to his head, then the other arm). And I got started off a little bit better. And I was lucky. I went out in the coal mine. I was transferred in Auschwitz to Birkenau.

In Birkenau I was working. This wasn't very easy.

Fay Brachman:

What year was this Max? What year was this?

Max Pila:

This? Uh, you know, if you're gonna ask me, it changed or maybe a year later or another year later, whatever, maybe it was that I was two years. Who didn't know where you are, what you have. And I was working outside. This was a little bit better. I was working a couple more guys, but I knew them. And I was working in Birkenau and in Birkenau, I was transferred to Auschwitz. And this went on all the years. Same thing. The work was very hard. For example, Auschwitz or Birkenau, we went out in this street. We built railroads, you know, in this, the wooden things was very heavy. Could be pick it up, maybe two people or whatever, but we were so weak and maybe five people picked it up. And he took the stick. "You Yuda," and " You Yuda," and beat him to death because you said, he said, "You're lazy." He was not lazy. He couldn't do it and kill them to death. Every day, I would say we were sleeping in blocks. You know, where it was not hygienic, nothing, flies everything. I would say every morning, they lay it out in the street, whatever it is, dead people taking away. That's even better than just to leave it laying like this. The only place where it was

Birkenau was a little bit better. A little bit, not too much. You could find still other people, whether were in Birkenau. For example, I would say Poles, or the Romanians of the Hungaries, we still trade a little bit. We got a piece of bread, but we always was hungry. The prayer, what it was was one thing for everyone... "Let me not die hungry." Let me have a nap before I'm dieing. The feeling I'm not hungry. This was the biggest prayer in the piece of bread in the day. But it did never happen. In 1943, in 1943, the Russian army came close to Auschwitz cause they start coming close in 1943, 19 44. You know, this was the biggest one where they pushed out the Nazis in the places where they got free. In this time we call it the Death March. Auschwitz was took out because there were no other nations except the Jewish people, like I told you before. So they cannot trade. They cannot. The Death March was three weeks. They took out all of them where they were in Auschwitz, loaded in opening wagons, March in Poland. Ice was dripping, no food, nothing. Until they were reached a place.

We went in lines, five, 10, whatever, in a line. Snow. Wooden shoes. The snow built up in the shoes. You couldn't go. You were behind the line, they shot, they kill. We went out in Auschwitz. I would say maybe about 50,000 of a hundred thousand. I don't know. We don't know. Nobody knows. We came another small place still in the winter, snow, cold, two weeks, no food. Not at all. People die. People, eat people. Sleep with people. Cutting the people fighting the people. We came in a small town, Leibitz. Very small town. Poland. We stopped over. There was in the thousand, 10,000 in the open wagons. Other people dead. There were no words, a better where, when nobody knows Leibitz was a very little town. We were sleeping outside in the snow, no food, nothing. This went on the Death March. This was one in the worst part that could happen to everywhere. Like the Crematorium, planes went around and saw the crematorium. Americans. Britains. we were begging every day were many killed before I going to crematorium. Right? Why They don't bomb it, why don't break it, the railroads? They don't gonna have the transportation. They didn't. They said it's a racial trick.

It's a racial trick. Nobody. The Red Cross was still some people, Holland or Rumanian, or Hungary. They send some packages where they got parents or whatever. They said, "We cannot accept it. This is a racial problem." This went on year, year, year, year, year. We got together, for example, sometime when it was a holiday or whatever, we talk about it, how life was, how life was in Poland. Religion, how religion was, things like this.

RD Moses:

I want to ask you while you're talking about religion. While you were in the camps, . . . the concentration camps, what was your feeling on religion, being Jewish?

Max Pila:

Well, let me tell you what, and I telling you the truth. When we went from the larger\*\* ghetto, transfer to Auschwitz. It was in the thousand and thousands of rabbis in the place where there were for example in Poland or in another, the rabbi never saw anything. The tallis was wrapped around all the way. He look out, maybe with one eye. And at this time, for example, rabbi, he was living only from people where they give it to him, just goes back 50 years when he went through the street, everybody was shaken. This is the, the [inaudible], because this is our leader. This is our leader. This is our life. When we came to Auschwitz, it was in the thousands and thousands of rabbis. The begging, the screaming, the widow was done on and on and on. "God, God, what did you do to your kids? What did you do to your people? God." So I wouldn't say religion, in the five years in concentration camp, didn't go on. That is what it was for example in our town, a little town, in Poland was Aleksander Chasidim [a specific sect of Hassidic rabbis]. In this time, our rabbi was Aleksander Rabbi.

They took him out in [Inaudible]. He didn't act anywhere else. Except for example, if you went in Cho butcher [kosher butcher] the-the intestines was not so clean. He said, "Don't eat this chicken anymore, 'cause it's cancer or whatever." Even if they were hungry and they were poor in Poland, he'd throw it away the chicken. He didn't eat it. He was Aleksanderan Rabbi. They took him out, they put him in the tallis, the put the tefillin. They took two Jews, one on this end, one on this end. And they send him up on top of a stepladder and they hauled it around in the town. They didn't slap him in the mouth. The Jews slap him in the mouth. Didn't kill\*\*\*. When we started off, for example, in concentration camp was, I wouldn't say, was wiped out the religion or whatever. They try to get it in there, to get in there. For example of a Hanukah, I wouldn't say (inaudible) that didn't exist. And the matzoh didn't exist. Nothing, whatever it is to make us pray. But the thing where it was, they started off getting weak in weak and they took him in the country.

…let me tell you now, another thing, when we got liberated, uh, when I was liberated in Bergen-Belsen in the 15th of April,

RD Moses:

Who- Was is Russian or the Americans. Who liberated you?

Max Pila:

No. Uh, when the Russian started off, you know, pushing to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belson, they got a little hard to go because, uh, the Britain started coming in. The Americans started coming in. So they didn't go too far. They were staying, uh, the only thing where it was very Bergen-Belson was liberated in the British Army a day, we were very hungry. We were laying in snow, like dead... We saw in Bergen-Belsen, a change. ... We didn't saw anymore of the gesstappo. We saw they putted on white pants. The Gestapo . . .,Bergen-Belson the last camp was liberated. In the 15 of April, in the 10th of may was the world. All the camps before was Liberated before the rabbi was somebody was alive or whatever. But American the camps, the English camps, the French GA cames, the Russian GA came. The only one that was his Bergen-Belsen was the last camp was liberated. Fifteen days before, one morning we were laying in the snow, hungry. We saw a Jewish tank. We saw a Jewish tank with David Star.

[Inaudible]

We couldn't understand what this is 'cause we didn't know the world is, or the world is known. We know one thing: we hungry. We see in the British Army was a Jewish Brigade. Was the Hagana the Irgun and the worst tribe to work in the British in started seeing what's the hurdle is okay, eye condition. It, you go ahead. Bergen-Belsen was in hundredth of it into 50th denominations. Also Romania, Yugoslavia, Jews everywhere. Everyone had example of Poles or Romanian of Hungarian or whatever they build themselves. Had a, them people, a kitchen a Jewish people was no better to build the kitchen. The same horrible, the same trusis the same terrible, no better was to build the kitchen to the Jewish people. The British, I wouldn't say was the best liberators. The best liberators was the Russian army. When the Russian army came in the concentration camp, wherever it was Gestapo or Germany or German, they took horses. They pulled them up to the horses that when four weeks killed them killed, them killed them horses, the Auschwitz, the German, okay. Auschwitz, all overran. This was the best liberator, the Russian an army. The Russian, what you're saying is the Russian army slaughtered. The Germans who were there. Yeah. Yeah, they doing, they could what they could.

They tried holy weeks, forever. The mind was made up kill, kill. Cause you wouldn't believe it. How many in the concentration camp, they killed Russian people. Soldiers, soldiers. I'm not talking. already about Jews. Whether the soldiers in the thousand, they took Theran under this Hang Hang. So the Russian army pay them back. The American army was a little bit better where the American army liberated. They build the kitchen forever. Very, and it was good. The British army was not so good. It was a problem in it. It was a problem. Israel. He can't of you Jewish or you are. And if you were liberated better Belgium\*\*\* but the British was not the best.

RD Moses:

Now let me ask you now, after the, your liberation from the camp, route of the camps, how long did you stay in Europe?

Max Pila:

Okay. Love to tell you What happened,

RD Moses:

But also want know when and where did you meet Rose?

Max Pila:

Yes. Okay. let me tell you what happened poet? For example, I was born. I mean, I was liberated in Bergen-Belsen. nIn Mag\*\*, in germany. I get it in, uh, came in the Hagan in the Irgon was working. The Haganah, in the Irgun, was working to health man and to taking some marketable\*\*. But the British army did allow this much, the ship Exodus I'm supposed to be also in the ship Exodus, but they didn't allow us to go in out of Bergen-Belsen how much they were gone in the Haganah, could saving them in get Berg. They went under ship. They went under shore. My problem was, I didn't get the time and I didn't get, reach the ship. I did remember myself. My mother has got in Brussels, a sister. Then they send me, in Germany. And another came between Holland in Belgium. I start get at names because I knew my mother has got a sister in Brussels and I send out names. What's my name is where my mother was.

RD Moses:

Take your time.

Max Pila:

I send up words. I got two cousins. They were in Brussels. They were in the Resistance. They were communist. They were in the Resistance. They were came against the Nazi in. They came and I gave him my names and I gave him my mother's name. And I gave him this history. My aunts living that she survived, the two sons, kept her covered in the Resistance and she didn't get dead there.

I came to Belgium. I had one picture. Now what I find in Belgium, my mother, I came to Belgium. They took me out in concentration camp, think came in between, holland in Belgium. They took me to brussels , they were living awy from brussels, in Bruge and there were working only coal mine or factories was we, I couldn't go. I couldn't work. I was quite a big time. And there, I knew Rose when she was in Poland, when she was 13 years old. Cause in Poland in little pass, like Saturday, you didn't work. Saturday, Friday afternoon was shaobbos. So they got together in little pine betters that they lived widow or whatever they got together. And I knew Rose when she was 13 years old. She in the longer years, the sister immigrates Belgium, oldest sister, the, this was maybe she left. 1930-1935 . Maybe when I got liberated and I was in Brassel. I made it, like I told you the bund, you know, the bun organization all over the Europe that tried to help the Jewish people to get them food kitchens, everything. And I was in Brassel and I was in the Bundisher kitchen. And I ate, all of a sudden I said of, we got met together.

Had husband got killed in death March. Harry. My son was by cause he, she gave him away for 16 months old. To a gentile Lee was this time, five years old.

So we decided we're gonna get married. I wasn't married. Never cause I was nineteen years old, her sister take care of her. She was in Auschwitz all years, Ida the took to she lived through and she came back. She find child, he was given away to gentile people, not religious people. They didn't care better. They Jewish that example when the started out up Jewish kids where the parents was consideration came, they took this child hide over because in Brussels, there is in the nuns, is in the thousand thousand kids where the parents didn't come back and they were staying gentiles. The parents didn't come back. Harry, he is lucky. He was lucky. He lived through when rose took him back, like I say, and he started Yiddish time. And she is the mother. The people over there is the mother. Cause they raised them and went and you know, and learned in until now he arrives and reads Yiddish.

And we decided to get to get married becuase the husband didnt come back the decision was we have a child. I don't think by the way it was, the decision was between me and not to have anymore kids. And uh, this was the life and had, and then we didn't wanna stay Europe. It was involved. Another thing also. This people, they didn't got any kids. We saw between two pets. The child will not be happy. We couldn't take away the child. Cause they, raised him there is, he was, this was an pattern, the Patty scale. So we decided, okay, that's gonna be why. And then I couldn't get any, rose was a Belgium citizen, but I wasn't a Belgium citizen. I just came into Belgium and I didn't get any right to work over there. I got to have a permit to survive. This is social security at the, and I couldn't get a permit about, so later on we decided, oh, it'll not do any good. The child gonna betwe two parents between gentile parents. And he got back between Jewish people who did know later than these Jew.

And we decided to get it in, to move out of europe and go into the United States. When Henry came, as you know, he was 12 years old. Right? Excuse me. Now how, how did you come to United States at work? Okay. Let tell you what happened in Barass. The Jewish joy of the Jewish Federation was working to place and it was, I would say, but, um, 10,000, cause Belgium was a very good country. Belgium, Ladden, all of them, we were not Belgian citizen. Everything. After the world was a ration. We got a rations. We never did nothing for Belgium. Everywhere was called everything. You know, heating was instilling cold. They gave us for nothing coils. They give us us transportation of trams, of, of cinemas. Everything was gave for nothing. Just like you would be a Belgium citizen. And it was maybe got 10,000 in Brussels. And the takeaway, it was later on, you know, we said, no, we better give it of, you know, we don't wanna. So the joint signed up a place for me. The first place was Chicago to immigre. Did roses come with you to Chicago city? United States, Harry show, huh? Harry also came with, yeah. Okay. Yeah. When we were better little and Paul Young we're here from Chicago, but they said in Chicago's only living against this.

Them said, I'm not going to Chicago. Belgium, my nice place, a quiet play. I said, I'm not going to Chicago. I don't wanna be a gangster. The second place. Hold on a minute, man. That <laugh> the second place was for Flo that tried to find in the mob again.

RD Moses:

I want bother interrupt you. How did you, who told you about fors or how did you find out about Fort worth?

Max Pila:

What, what,

RD Moses:

How did you find out about coming to Fort worths? Who told

Max Pila:

You that's what I just want tell you. They find out in. Fort Worth part for, uh, because I was working, you know, in home, we were in textile, you know, food, textile, whatever. So we find out that example, port for is a very quiet place in, they proposed for it in said, said, well, I don't know. I would living all the time in Belgium and know were gonna be able to live. But the Harry was young also. And then we accept, we accepted. They start looking for about in the map of Europe. They couldn't find, they couldn't find it. They said, this must be in spade. (laughs) When I came to (inaudible)

RD Moses:

Stop a second.

Max Pila:

Okay.

Fay Brachman:

Max, you're doing so good.

RD Moses:

One second.

Max Pila:

Okay. Uh, when I had example, when I came to for 12, about years back, it was nothing. What? Well, this man Lancaster was the only street where you could go to Dallas. (laughs)

This killing me now, you're going to Lancaster. You dunno where you going? And so many threads. So when I did, but later on, we did example. When we came to Ellis island, you know, in New York and I saw New York and I said, rose, I said, no, we're not gonna live. It's too much garbage, everywhere. Where did you go? They call it Manhattan. There was so much garbage in this street was thinking. I said, no, we're not gonna stay. And rose has got to, but others over there, we said, we're gonna go where they send us. We came to <inaudible> and we did like it. At example, uh, when we went out in the street, we had dogs parking. That's our whole old fashioned, like in PO or whatever in Belgium, in, uh, we decided we like it. And I like it. I like, I like, I mean, I like F I don't like Dallas.

I like F max. I like Texas.

R.D. Moses:

Who were the first Jewish people you met when you came to Ft? Worth.

Max Pila:

(inaugible) Blenderman.

R.D. Moses:

Okay. Who else?

Max Pila:

Let me tell you why.

R.D. Moses:

 And where did you meet-

Max Pila:

-hold on a minute. When I came here. Okay. Uh, in Belgium, in Belgium, I couldn't go to textile because in PO we working textile by hand, by hand in PO, when I came to Belgium is electronic machinery. It's vodka and himself, you understand? I said, hell, that's crazy how you do it. So I, I couldn't go to that. And then later down, like I said, okay, in Belgium, I started off landing. Another thing, making purses, you know, letter with models, mid their curtain, mid machine, everything. And I did a very good life. Very good life. Cause, uh, textile, I couldn't do it because it was too much machinery, too much electronic and everything. Then when I came here, I was used to it that I had to work in.

You remember the old man? Okay. That's the story. I came here. The Federation sent me and this time was what was the director? Parm. Mr. Palm. In this time, when… newcomers is coming, they didn't help him much couldn’t tell you what the history was. I came in and he said, oh, you got to find yourself a jet. I said, what do you mean? I cannot do. I don't know where to go. I don't know what to do. But he said like this, oh, the first month we pay you, we gave you $30 hundred dollars a week. Then we didn't have no much to sleep. We didn't have no much to live. We, I have nothing. And he said, okay, you get this month. And then you got to go to work. Or then somehow I find the job for Mr. Mr. Did talk to Yiddish better than jid is a you and I started off working the Mr. Rave, but he was not one of him the biggest to make a living for him. But he did. He made, done the Marcuson and he couldn't get any overtime. They pay was very little, you know, when I was working by him maybe a year

And I said, no, I cannot make a living for this. And Harry you to go to school and things like this. You remember Jack Freeman? Sure. Still say, but you didn't ask you. How did you meet Meer? Yeah. He remember Al. Oh, sure. Yeah. Okay. I talked Tobo and I said, um, Jack Freeman was in this time, a very big mahe in the she in this time. And I talked to 10 of them. They're cousins. And I said, you're not 10 of them. I would like to go work in the shore. Well, no joke. I wasn't this time or five years old. So what I could work. And I said to 10 them, I said, who is it? Big market. He was already here. Two years. (inaudible) came early. He said, I got a cousin here. And he's a very big market in the show, Jack Freeman.

I went to Jack Freeman and I talked to him and I said, listen, I'm young. And I don't care what I'm doing. I can work in the yard. I can work in the kitchen. I can work everywhere. I can do everything. What I want to make mothers. So just to have enough to get in this time was working over there at the old synagogue, a tall guy, a very blonde tall guy. I forgot what his name was. Who gave in this tall guy for what? They made the trailers. You remember what? Salem, uh, trailers it's sleep in the it's a Salem. When his name people, Henry Salem. Who? Henry Salem women. I forgot who she didn't die too long. Maybe for four or five years was at that from Linsky? No, no, no. Okay. She was over what? The son, the son comes to the services. Say's father probably. Probably Henry Salem. It isn't maybe. Okay. So he was working. He give him it. The, she was a year old. How little he minute he didn't let <laugh>.

Uh, I started off toxic Jack. Okay. He said, it's possible. Why not? You want a word? It's possible. We do it. And I was high. I was high Melvin Rosenthal. My brother. Yeah. I know Melvin Rosen. I was high. And uh, I don't remember the second that I said, and I was high. Melvin Rosen. I came in and show a was, start talking to me. He cannot, he cannot. He said, max, I wanna make practice for the services for the kid. He didn't want the men in the kitchen. I don't know. The sure was a year old when I started or I said, Avalon at (inaudible) in the, oh, I'm talking yet. That's fine. If you wanna go into the kitchen, I'll let you into the kitchen.

And he got fired. Went up to go. And I start off working in the kitchen, making kid cha making a breakfast. I, you, uh, two years, the old sh didn't make any Shabbat because he didn't wanna do it two years when I was wearing, they got only the services, eight o'clock in the night, but I got sick and they went home two years. Then the latest auxiliary was a very strong organizational in the old shoe. And they came to me and they said, max, we want to make Friday night, nine o'clock services and make connect Shabe. They said, yeah, why not? So we started off making oil Shabbats after two years working. And, uh, just went on 25 years over there. <inaudible> as you know, was not a strong guy. He did the best what he could, but for him <inaudible> he was very good. He was very good. Very, so this was the start, but I went in, in the shoe.

(Tape cuts off)