

UKHMF TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPT – ARON SLOMA

[Testimony: 1hr 57 mins. Artefacts: 2 mins. 34 secs.]

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10:00:00:00

Aron Sloma

My name is Aron Sloma. I'm born 2nd of July 1930 in Copenhagen. We were rounded up by the Germans in 1943 and sent to Theresienstadt where we were liberated in April 1945.

[Fade to black and back up]

10:00:22:10

Interviewer

I know this answer to this question, but can you tell me whether or not you've given your testimony before?

10:00:30:01

Aron Sloma

Yes, I have. I have given it, er, it must have been about 1980 or something like that. Maybe a little later. Um. My, um, local synagogue, um, asked for, whether they had any, any survivors from Europe, and, er, they gave, er, them my name, and, er, I was interviewed, and I've got two DVDs which I've actually handed over to you. I haven't had them back yet, but they're promised me back.

10:01:18:19

And, er, then I've been interviewed by the Imperial War Museum. Somebody came back to me, and, er, we talked about what had happened to me, to me and our family, and, um, it wasn't filmed, it was just taped. And then I have been to, er, the Holocaust Centre in Nottingham. Er, I gave some, some speeches there, at one point, and, er, so the, in, connection with that, then, that, that, that, they made interviews where I, sort of, told my, er, my story and, and showed some pictures and whatnot, and I still, I think, they, they've probably still got them.

10:02:16:16

Interviewer

Do you find it difficult talking about your past?

10:02:19:23

Aron Sloma

Not anymore. I did the first few years. Um, it was actually quite strange. My, my parents talked about it non-stop, and, er, I, I just left the room, and em, when I started talking about it, um, it was like I just couldn't get it out. Er, but then later on, when I met Sheila and she encouraged me to talk about it, and gradually I opened up, and since then, I, I, I, I've talked about it. It doesn't, it doesn't really, er, bother me to, to talk about it; other than of course, I, I get emotional about it, but, er, so that's how, how, how it is.

10:03:13:13

Interviewer

There was a long period in your life where, although your parents spoke about it, you decided that the best way for you was just to, not, not to forget it, but just to put it aside?

10:03:22:24

Aron Sloma

Yeah, I mean, I just couldn't, couldn't get it, get it out.

[Cut for technical issue with sound].

10:03:26:24

Interviewer

[...] you, you, for a long time, you decided not to talk about it, but, but now that you have started talking about, do you still find it very difficult?

10:03:33:23

Aron Sloma

No, I, I don't, don't find, er, I, I find it emotional, but I do, I don't, I haven't got any difficulties in talking about it.

10:03:44:24

Interviewer

Why do you think it's important for people like you to share your experiences, and record your testimony?

14:04:57:09

Aron Sloma

Well, I, I think that, um, if I can transfer the information to a younger generation. I know it's, it's history for them, but it might be the, I think it's the right thing to do for, for them to listen to a person that has been through this horrible time. They might believe it, or they might not, but anyway, I think it, it, it, it, it probably can be of some value.

10:04:28:13

Interviewer

What do you say to people who don't believe Holocaust, to Holocaust deniers?

10:04:33:17

Aron Sloma

Well, I, I, I must say I've actually not, never met anybody that's simply denied it. Er, but, um, I mean if I did, then I would say, "Well, you're wrong, but how can I convince you? I haven't got any, any marks or anything on my arm, or anything like that. But, er, believe me or not.

10:04:58:04

Interviewer

You may not have marks on your body, but you've probably got them on your soul.

10:05:01:10

Aron Sloma

Yes, absolutely, absolutely. And I'm not even. I might even, even, because of, of my illness, that, that's, er, that's got something to do with, with, er, the time I spent in, in, in, in camp. I don't know. It's, er, It might be a case, but, er, it's, it's there.

10:05:29:07

Interviewer

And it's a constant reminder, no doubt.

10:05:29:01

Aron Sloma

Yeah, yeah.

10:05:31:19

Interviewer

You had your own children, didn't you?

10:05:34:08

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:05:35:13

Interviewer

How much of your story did you share with them?

10:05:38:09

Aron Sloma

Well, um, I, I didn't, that was the period when I didn't talk about it. So, er, I don't know whether, whether you know, I had a son that was killed in Israel. So I never had a chance to talk to him about it. My daughter has not been really interested until, yeah, I mean, we've only talked about it, real, for real, a week ago.

10:06:13:10

Interviewer

Was that in preparation for this interview?

10:06:15:20

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:06:17:06

Interviewer

How was that?

10:06:18:24

Aron Sloma

Um, it was, um, It was, was, yeah, how, how shall I put, describe it? It was, er, it was strange in a way, because I have given her the two DVDs about the first interview I, I made, and I'm not sure that she ever watched it. And er, I'm even, I'm not even sure whether it was her or her husband that, sort of, er, kept on asking questions. We were sitting outside in our flat, on our, er, nice terrace, and, er, he was in, he was questioning me quite lot, and, and, er, so she, sort of, came into it, but, er, in a way, it was, er. Yes, it was, it was, it was nice. I, I mean, I, I, I wanted her to know what had happened to, to me and my family.

10:07:32:24

Interviewer

It's quite often a, a repeating theme for us here, with people who don't share their stories for different reasons, and then do start talking about their experiences, and experience a great deal of relief that they are able to, to share what has happened in their past.

10:07:52:07

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Can imagine. Yeah.

10:07:55:11

Interviewer

Do you hope that that will now enable you to talk more with your daughter? Because you've got grandchildren as well. I don't know how old they are.

10:08:03:01

Aron Sloma

Oh, yes, they, they are, I mean, the youngest, she's 20, what is she now? 20, 21.

10:08:09:00

Interviewer

Okay, so they're old enough to know.

10:08:10:11

Aron Sloma

They're old enough to know, yes. Yes.

10:08:11:18

Interviewer

And you've never thought to talk to them about it, either?

10:08:14:11

Aron Sloma

Well, they have, um, well, the youngest one, Camilla, and the oldest one, Laura, they have had a project in s, in school, and I know that, that they had the, the DVDs, um, so, so they must have watched them, and made a thesis. I mean, made, made a, a, a essay or whatever, er, they, they did. That was in Copenhagen, while I was still living there.

10:08:48:21

Um, I'm not sure about, about my grandson. He's in the middle, um, but I know that last time, he and his girlfriend came over here to London, then, um, we talked a lot about it, and he asked me a lot of questions, so he's, I think he might be interested, especially when, when, when we get, I get the new tape.

10:09:15:23

Interviewer

Aside from the enormous grief that you must have about your son, you sound like you're sad that you didn't tell him about your life?

10:09:24:09

Aron Sloma

Yeah, yeah. Well, I'm sad whenever it c, comes to him. It's very sad altogether. He was only, was only 23.

10:09:46:07

Interviewer

Was he in the army?

10:09:47:22

Aron Sloma

Pardon?

10:09:48:08

Interviewer

Was, was he in the army?

10:09:49:21

Aron Sloma

Yes, he [*clears throat*] he was, er, very much engaged with Bnei Akiva in Copenhagen, and, er, after he finished high school, he wanted to go to Israel and he joined up with a, a kibbutz – Lavi - where he was, for about a year, and, um, I mean, I, I've never been very religious, and it we didn't have any, er, really religious, er life in, in, in the house. So it was all, er, the way, the way he, he, he was, was taken in, in, in Ben Eakiva. It, it really suited his, his, his, er, his, er...

10:10:57:05

Interviewer

His disposition, or his personality?

10:10:58:08

Aron Sloma

Yeah, I mean, yeah. He, his whole attitude to life. And, um, then when, when he, he stayed in, in , in Kibbutz Lavi for about a year, and then they suggested that, um, he should go, and they had a special scheme. He would go into the army, and at the same time, he could study, er, Talmudic, er, Talmudic stories. So he lived in a, on the West Bank in a town called Kiryat Arba. Um, and, um, he was, when I, what I later on experienced, completely brainwashed into what he was doing. So I mean, when, he, he went to, to, to, to Hebron, the Friday afternoon, to buy some food, and he was, er, shot in the head by a sniper. Um, and when it came to his funeral a few days later, the rabbi from Kiryat Arba he tried to persuade us to let him being buried there. And he was, he was a very, very dangerous man. Really dangerous. Um, we had to, to fight to persuade them to, to, to, to get him buried in Jerusalem. And in the military cemetery.

10:12:49:13

Interviewer

I'm very sorry that you've had so much sadness. It's, there's nothing anybody can say.

10:12:53:19

Aron Sloma

That was, that was really, really, really, really sad.

10:13:00:05

Interviewer

There's no words of comfort for something like that, is there?

10:13:03:16

Aron Sloma

No.

10:13:03:24

Interviewer

No.

10:13:10:17

Interviewer

When we talk about giving testimony, why, why did you accept the invitation today? Why did you feel it was important for you to share your story?

10:13:25:01

Aron Sloma

Well, I, I think that if it can be of any use to, to inform next generation what went on, then I think it's, er, I, I, I'm, I'm pleased to, to be a contributor.

10:13:43:07

Interviewer

Thank you very much for d, for accepting the invitation, because I know it is hard. It really is. Of course. And when we talk about the Nazis now, how do you reflect on them? How do you feel towards the Nazis?

10:13:59:19

Aron Sloma

Well, the Nazis I could never forget, forgive. But I mean, the, the, the, the new generation in Germany, they shouldn't be made responsible for what their parents and grandparents did. But I could never forgive their, their parents. And when I, I've been to Germany for a few times, and I still, when I hear German, it, sort of, gives me the creeps. But, er, on the other hand, er, I think, I think, I think that the, I can't, can't blame, blame, blame er, the new generation for, for what happened.

10:14:55:13

Interviewer

Would you voluntarily go to Germany, or do you go under duress?

10:15:00:05

Aron Sloma

I've got, I, I've been there voluntarily. I've been to Berlin, and, er, while I was still working, then my, I went on some studying to Munich. So, um, well, well, I mean, it's, it's, it's only the language that, that's, that's, make, makes me feel very, very, very odd. It, sort of, er, gives me something in, in, in the back, back of my, my, my spine, where... and that's even the youngsters, when I hear them. I mean, it's just the language, because it, it, it simply switched my, my, my, my feelings back to what happened in, in, in the eighteen months I was away.

10:15:48:08

Interviewer

Completely understandable. How much of your early life do you think framed what happened later on in your life? How, how much were you influenced by your experiences?

10:16:02:24

Aron Sloma

You mean, from, from the period I went, I went into camp and, and, and then later on? Well,

10:16:11:18

Interviewer

How is it, how did it affect you?

10:16:14:05

Aron Sloma

Well, I mean, when, when I came back, then I was just determined to get into, into a, a normal life, so to speak. And, er, my par, or my, my father, especially, always, er, said, "You must get an education." Er, he wasn't exactly educa, educated. He wanted me to, to, to, to end up, but, but that's beside the point, but, um, I was determined and I, er, I had, didn't have any schooling in, while I was away, so, er, I had a lot of catching up to do, but I was lucky. I went into a school and, and, er, lycee gymnasium, and, er, got a, a higher education as an architect.

10:17:15:18

Interviewer

Do you consider yourself a Holocaust survivor?

10:17:18:20

Aron Sloma

Yes, I do, yeah.

10:17:22:14

Interviewer

Are you proud of that?

10:17:24:18

Aron Sloma

Yes, in a way, yes. Yeah. I mean, it, it's, er, it was a horrible experience, but, er, on the other hand, I came through it, probably scarred somewhere, but, er, I s, did come through it, and I lived a relatively normal life.

10:17:49:16

Interviewer

When you look at, um, where we're at in the world, the political landscape that surrounds us, do you feel that we learnt lessons from that period of history?

10:18:01:06

Aron Sloma

No. It happens, and it happens every day, unfortunately. There's been Kosova, there's been Uganda, and what's happening in Syria at the moment. I mean, it's, er, it's, it's just depressing just to think about that we haven't learned anything about what, what happened then.

10:18:26:10

Interviewer

That is a very depressing view, isn't it, that there was so much suffering for nothing.

10:18:32:03

Aron Sloma

Yeah, absolutely. But, um, it just doesn't seem that, that's, that, that the human race is clever enough to, to, to, to behave properly. It's er, it's, it is really devastating to, to think about what, what, what goes on.

10:18:55:01

Interviewer

And it's devastating to feel that there was so much sadness and so much suffering, and, and that we really didn't learn anything.

10:19:06:04

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:19:08:19

Interviewer

And I guess that's probably part of your motivation for coming to talk today, to, to I, to help to issue a warning along with all the other voices of the people who survived.

10:19:18:18

Aron Sloma

Yeah, yeah. I think, I think it, it, it's a, it's a the right thing to do for, for, for future generations. Whether it has, will be having any effect, that is of course very doubtful, because looking back at what happened since 1945 to now, nothing has changed [?].

10:19:42:11

Interviewer

Nevertheless, the Holocaust was quite unique, wasn't it, in, in its, um, in its methods [*cough off camera*] of exterminating a population.

10:19:51:17

Aron Sloma

Yes.

10:19:52:15

Interviewer

There was something quite special about it, wasn't there?

10:19:54:16

Aron Sloma

Yeah, absolutely.

10:19:56:00

Interviewer

And when I mean special, like, you know what I'm saying, there don't you? There was something quite extraordinarily horrendous about the methods that were used.

10:20:06:09

Aron Sloma

Yes.

10:20:07:23

Interviewer

When you reflect on your life, there must be, although you said that we haven't learnt lessons, there must be lessons that you wish that we had learnt. Is, is there a message that you could pass on to the generations of what you feel that we missed?

10:20:25:20

Aron Sloma

Hmm. That's a difficult one. [*Clears throat*].

10:20:41:13

Aron Sloma

Well, I mean, it's, er,

10:20:46:03

Aron Sloma

I mean, the only message we can, can give is simply the testimony of, of what happened. And then it must be up to the individual how they are taking it. How they, how, what effect it'll have on them. But, er, I, I mean, I, I can't, I can't see, and I really don't want to, to, to, to be a preacher, and, and, and, to, to, to, to give them any, any, any, um, advice of what, what, what the, what they should and shouldn't do.

10:21:24:09

Interviewer

I fully respect that. Er, I, I, I suppose it's more a case that, um, the technology that we're using enables you to be able to speak to, not just your grandchildren, but their grandchildren as well, and they will be able to access this testimony, and listen to you and if there was one thing that you might have learnt in your life that you wanted to pass on, it's not about preaching, it's just about sharing.

10:21:53:20

Aron Sloma

Yeah, I mean that's, yes, I mean, I can, can, can see a, that what, what happened to me, whether it's, has got any effect, I, I wouldn't know, cause I'll be gone by then [*Laughs*].

10:22:08:24

Interviewer

I, I don't know whether it's a question of, of, of tolerance or forgiveness or standing up for yourself. I'm not going, its, its, may be something, cause it is such a difficult question. Maybe you can think about it, and we can return to it later. And if you don't want to answer it later, that's also fine. It's very difficult to answer that question, and some people are comfortable, and some people aren't.

10:22:29:16

Aron Sloma

Yeah. But I mean, it's, it's, it's more, more information than anything else, because it's a, you can't expect people that hasn't been through it to understand the feeling behind it, but they can get some, get the facts presented to them and they can take them in or not.

10:23:00:00

Interviewer

Were you worried about giving your testimony today? Were you anxious about it?

10:23:04:19

Aron Sloma

No, I wasn't, no.

10:23:07:08

Interviewer

Clearly you've done some preparation though. The fact that you spoke to your daughter for the first-time last week. You must have been thinking about it?

10:23:15:06

Aron Sloma

Yeah. I did think about it, but, er, I thought, I think about more and more as, as a duty of me to, to, to, to pass, pass it on, if it can be of any use.

10:23:32:03

Interviewer

Well, it certainly is, thank you. So let's, um, now go to the beginning. Um, about your life, about your family, where you were in the family. Um, and your parents. Can you, can you give me a sense of the life that you were born into?

10:23:48:20

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Well, both my parents were immigrants. Um, my mother came to Denmark when she was three years old. My grandparents had ten children when sh, my mother was the, was the, er, number two, and they lived, I mean, they were very religious, my, my grandparents. I mean, my, my, my grandfather went to synagogue every Shab, ev, every Saturday, and, um, my grandmother was, she was walking into the country. She was selling haberdasheries, and then she came back with a live chicken, or whatever, er, from the farmers, and she sold them on to, to, to the Jewish community in Copenhagen.

10:24:59:09

Um, they, amongst them, they spoke only Yiddish, so [pause] the Danish, they, they, they, they knew they only got from, from, from us, from us youngsters. And when my, my mother was okay. She, she spoke fairly good Danish. My father came from Poland. He had a very strange thing happening to him. His mother, er, had a, like a pension in Łódź in Poland. Er, his father was a baker, but was away most of the week. So she found comfort somewhere else and it, er, ended up, er, that she and, er, a new man, and my father's elder sister, no, yes, went to Copenhagen and left my father and his brother in Łódź. So they made their own way from Łódź to Copenhagen about nineteen hundred and thirteen, and, um, then they, they just had to make their own ways.

10:26:44:06

Interviewer

Tell me about your family. You had two sisters?

10:26:47:22

Aron Sloma

Yes, I had one younger, and an older sister. Er,

10:26:52:11 *[Interrupting each other].*

Interviewer

So you were the only treasured boy. The prince of the family.

10:26:56:07

Aron Sloma

I was squeezed in between.

10:26:59:19

Interviewer

I bet you were spoilt rotten.

10:27:01:16

Aron Sloma

Yes, I was, er, I was spoiled rotten because my, my parents had a workshop back home, at that point, and, er, I mean, I don't remember it, but I have, I was told that I was, I was, er, was spoilt a lot.

10:27:20:23

Interviewer

Fast forwarding and then we'll go back. You were very lucky that, as a family, you stayed together during the way.

10:27:27:07

Aron Sloma

Yeah, yeah.

10:27:28:11

Interviewer

Did you have a very close bond? Were you a very close family? Very loving family?

10:27:34:02

Aron Sloma

Well, I mean, my, my, you mean, within our little circle? Yes. It, I mean, my, my parents were, were, were, showed their, their, their, their feeling as they do, as they did at that time. I mean, er, compared to what parents look, look like today, I mean, you know, you've got a daughter too, haven't you? It's, er, you tell them that you love you, and whatnot. They didn't do that, but they, they showed in, in, in, in some ways after all. Um, I mean they didn't come up to you and give you hugs and, and, and kisses like, like you, you would, you do these days. But, um, I mean, they behaved just like, like, like, like, like people did at that time.

10:28:30:00

Interviewer

Things have changed so much haven't they, in terms of being, kind of, demonstrative. Um, but you were, you were a close family, you were a loving family, um, but you didn't have a lot, did you, in terms of wealth?

10:28:42:08

Aron Sloma

No. My father, er, didn't have an education. He came, when he came to Denmark, then he started to work in a sweat shop, and, er, educated himself as a, as a tailor. Um, later on had a workshop on his own, didn't go well.

Er, my mother, er, was, er, she was serving in, in, in a shop, as a shop assistant.

Um, and later on, when, when they got married, she, er, helped my father out in the workshop, and did all, she did all the hand, hand-sewing and my father did the machine, no, s, s, sewing, and the pressing.

[Camera card change]

10:29:33:02

Interviewer

[...] Um, my next question for you was about religion, not now but then. How religious was your family?

10:29:41:14

Aron Sloma

Well, my, my, my grandparents on my mother's side and my mother, uh, were quite observant. I mean, they, they kept, kept everything. My father was very cool.

[laughter] He, he didn't take part in, in any religion at all and, uh, that was actually a little bit of a conflict in, in, in , in the house because my mother wanted to, to, to keep kosher and, and, uh, keep all the traditions but, but, uh, he wasn't very, very

interested. So I wasn't brought up any way, way religious. They did, though, send me to a Jewish boys' school in Copenhagen where I was up to we were, um, rounded up in 1943. So that was from, I was seven to 13.

10:30:50:05

Interviewer

Did you feel Jewish? Did you have a Jewish identity?

10:30:54:18

Aron Sloma

Yeah, I mean, I mean, it's a, with, with the, I mean, all the pupils were Jewish. Not all the teachers were, though. But, uh, we still had, I mean, we learned Hebrew and we learned the, the history of, of, uh, of, uh, of the Jewish people, apart from, from, from, from normal edu, education. So, uh, yes, I, I did know and, and also, when it came to, to, my, uh, my 13th year where, uh, I had to, to be Bar Mitzvahed, um, that was all done in the school.

10:31:36:09

Interviewer

Did you experience any forms of antisemitism growing up?

10:31:41:04

Aron Sloma

No, never. Never.

10:31:46:10

Interviewer

Good. What about school? How was school?

10:31:52:04

Aron Sloma

Well, I, I quite enjoyed it, the, the part of, of, of schooling. Um, yeah. *[laughter]* Well, we had, we had this, this, um, teacher. Um, I dunno what the, why she, she was specially fond of me but she was, obviously, because she sent me in town to buy some oranges for her and, uh, in the end they asked me to make coffee for the teachers. *[laughter]* So, I, I don't think I was very popular because of that because I, I could just go, leave the lessons when I want and I liked to because I, I had to go and prepare the coffee for the teachers. *[Laughter]*

10:32:46:21

Interviewer

So you had special privileges? You were the teacher's pet?

10:32:49:19

Aron Sloma

Yes.

10:32:50:01

Interviewer

But as a consequence you weren't that popular with your friends? *[Laughter]*

10:32:52:23

Aron Sloma

Exactly. [Laughter]

10:32:54:00

Interviewer

I understand that. Um, tell me about the summers? Cause you had very interesting summer holidays, didn't you? Where did you go?

10:33:01:02

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Well, um, that same teacher, she was actually member of Salvation Army and she had some very good connections to the, the Christian community in, in, in Denmark and, um, at that point the Danish government had set up a scheme that, if people wanted to, then could, they could send their underprivileged children into the country to live with the farmers during the summer holiday. So she arranged for, for me, uh, my cousin was in the same class and he also went and a few other, uh, from different places. So when I was seven, yeah, um, I was sent on a steam train in a white sailor suit, hang out the window and, when we arrived in northern part of Jutland it was absolutely black, the coat. [laughter]

10:34:22:19

But anyway, I, um, was posted at a pr, a priest in something called Tuen in ... in the northern part of [Drelden]. Um, they're very nice people that couldn't have, make any, uh, couldn't, uh, uh, get any children themselves so they actually, at one point, asked to adopt me but, which my mother says, [Laughter] "No way." Um, but result was that I stayed with them for, um, I think it was all together seven years. Even after I came back I came, went down there and my, uh, younger sister went with, with me.

10:35:12:21

Interviewer

Did you live with them for seven years or did you just spend the summers there? You lived, you lived with them full-time for seven,

10:35:19:04

Aron Sloma

No, no, no. Just for the summer .

10:35:20:10

Interviewer

Just for the summers. Just for the summers.

10:35:20:23

Aron Sloma

just for the summer holidays, for six weeks. But, I mean, I had wonderful, wonderful time, cause we were living in the middle of Copenhagen in a, in a flat and we didn't, there wasn't any greenery around or anything and all of a sudden I was with the priest and the, uh, what's he called again? Uh, the church warden, um, local

teacher, he was living more or less next, next door and they had five children and all boys and, uh, especially the older boys and we became, we went down very well, so much so that every Sunday we had to go to church but, um, I wasn't forced downstairs. I was, um, upstairs with the organ, treading the pedal, and the young, the oldest son of, of the, of the teacher, uh, he was playing the organ, so we had a good laugh over that.

10:36:26:20

Interviewer

Sounds like very happy times.

10:36:29:04

Aron Sloma

Very, very happy indeed, yes.

10:36:32:00

Interviewer

Then 1940, the 9th of April, um, um, German forces occupied Denmark, didn't they? They came in very quickly, taking just six hours?

10:36:43:01

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:36:43:20

Interviewer

And the Danish forces surrendered very quickly, didn't they?

10:36:46:15

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:36:47:10

Interviewer

Do you remember that?

10:36:48:24

Aron Sloma

Yes, I do. Well, what I do remember is that, um, it was the 9th of April. I heard this, um, strange noise and I realised it was aeroplanes. Um, they only bombed the sugar factory and I remember I was, uh, went up, uh, far, where I lived my parents up in the loft together, my father, and we looked out of the window up there and we could see the flames from, from, from this building. That's, uh, is, is what I remember. And what, of course, also I remember was that because we, we, we started, a normal life, so to speak, straight after. I mean, I went to school every day, uh, and, uh, there were lots of German, German soldiers around and, and the whole atmosphere was, was, was so depressive.

10:37:56:21

Interviewer

Mm. But actually the Germans weren't particularly interested in Denmark, were they, apart from that it was full of supplies and it was on its way to Norway.

10:38:05:24

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:38:06:16

Interviewer

So there wasn't a great deal of animosity, was there?

10:38:09:03

Aron Sloma

No, no, there wasn't. I mean, it, um, it was, was, uh, what should I say – a very soft of takeover. Um, the Germans were interested in, in Denmark because of all the agricultural product, product they could get from there. There was no resistance, or anything like that - at that point. It just came late on. The Danish government was still in power as much as they, they could.

The Police were still, still, um, uh, there. I mean, it, it, it was sort of fairly normal, so to speak.

10:38:51:06

Interviewer

And King, King Christian was still reigning, wasn't he, and he was able to speak quite openly about his support for the Jews, is that right?

10:38:58:03

Aron Sloma

Yes, yes, yes. He, he was a, a, on horseback every morning he was, went through Copenhagen and, uh, I remember at one point they talked about the, the Jewish people should wear a, a star, um, and he said, "Well, if they're going to wear, then I'm going to wear the same." I know that's, that's, might be rumour but, anyway, that's, that what is, what is what, what was said.

10:38:27:13

Interviewer

Nevertheless, you're explaining the occupation wasn't as terrifying as it could've been and was in other countries.

10:39:33:19

Aron Sloma

No, not, not at that point.

10:39:35:11

Interviewer

Mm. But then soon there was an anti-German movement that started to build up in Denmark, wasn't there?

10:39:40:17

Aron Sloma

Yeah. It, it, it's, um, uh, June 1943, uh, tension started. Uh, *[clears throat]* I think that, uh, the Danish government was, was, um, I mean, there, there was some of their powers was taken away and, uh, there was quite a lot of op, of, uh, opposition, uh, against the Germans then and then, in August '43, the Danish police were arrested and sent to, I think to Neuengamme concentration camp and, um, then, uh, in, late on in ,in October '43, um, the rounded up what they could round up of, of Jewish people.

10:40:41:18

Interviewer

So there was a, a slow process of feeling, um, that there was a, a proper German takeover in the country?

10:40:50:00

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Yeah. The,

10:40:51:06

Interviewer

And, and then eventually all the government resigned, didn't they?

10:40:53:16

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:40:53:24

Interviewer

And then do you remember the, the increasing, or the increased feeling of anxiety within the, um, Danish population? Do you remember feeling anxious or worried?

10:41:02:22

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Well, I mean, that, I mean, I was only 13. I mean, uh,

10:41:08:11

Interviewer

But, still, a 13-year-old is able to absorb what's happening around.

10:41:11:02

Aron Sloma

Yeah, yeah, I mean, I could, could absorb that, that, uh, the, the lot of tension but didn't really understand what was going on, to be quite honest. But, I mean, I, I got the feeling from, from, from my father was, was, uh, very much involved and, and, and he sort of conveyed the, the, the, the, the, the feeling that, uh, of, of what, what's going on. Well, how he felt it, at least.

10:41:42:02

Interviewer

So tell me what happened with your family at that point, cause you tried to flee, didn't you?

10:41:47:21

Aron Sloma

Well, nothing happened to start, not before '40, uh, in October '43.

10:41:54:07

Interviewer

'43.

10:41:55:03

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:41:55:13

Interviewer

Exactly. September.

10:41:56:02

Aron Sloma

Well, what happened was that, uh,

10:41:57:20

Interviewer

You were 13 at this point, weren't you?

10:41:59:01

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:41:59:15

Interviewer

Hm mm.

10:41:59:17

Aron Sloma

That's right. Um, my elder sister came back end of September and said to, to, to, to, to my parents, "You have to get out of here because the Germans are going to, to round us up." She was living with a friend down, down the road. Um, my father's reaction was, "I'm a Danish citizen. I've got full, uh, citizenship. I'm Danish. Nothing will happen to us", which was a, of course, a very, very nice attitude but it, it just didn't count when it came to it.

10:42:43:16

So when it came to the, it must've been, was the 1st of October or was the 30th of September? The greengrocer that lived across the street from us – my mother went there to buy potatoes and, and whatnot – um, he came over said, "Schloma, you

have to get out of here. Not tomorrow. Now. You come over to our place, you, uh, you, you, we are living above the, st, shop. We've got room for you. Come over here." [?] so he said, "There's no buts. You just have to go because otherwise you will be rounded up." So we all went over there and, true enough, during that night, after the 1st of October, they bang on the door. Was nobody there so, so they couldn't get, get hold of us and then this greengrocer, Mr [Hasson?], I mean, they're very kind people. He said, "Just don't worry. We'll get you up the coast, try to get you to Sweden. Your house, whatever, your flat, whatever is there, we'll take care of. Don't worry about that."

10:44:14:06

We live there a few days and then they got us, uh, transport up to northern part of Zealand. My sister, [clears throat] uh, through, uh, through some friends got hold of a summer house up there and, uh, we split up so that she, my elder sister and my father went on bicycle up there, I went with my mother on the train and my younger sister, I had, I had a, a, an, an aunt that was married to a non-Jewish, uh, man and his brother said, "I'll take her up there and I'll meet the rest of the family." So he went by train but, when he arrived to Helsingør, came off the train, there was one of the, the Danish collaborators called, Gestapo Ure, as they called him, and he went up to him and said, "This is a Jewish girl. I've got a, a little, uh, mate for her." So he took her away and, and, and there's not much he could do, and she was taken to an old camp, uh, in northern part of, of, of Zealand called Ge, um, Horserød, and, uh, well, I, I come to that later.

10:46:05:09

But then in the meantime we met in that summer house, the, the four of us, and, of course, my mother was completely devastated when she heard that, uh, my younger sister wasn't there. We had, I think about three attempt to get by boat to Sweden but it failed every, every time. I mean, there were, uh, German patrols uh, what they called? Um, um, boats up, up and down the coast, uh, all the time, so we couldn't get, get away. Uh, in the end we ended up in a church loft in a little town called Gillelje in northern part of Zealand.

10:47:01:01

We were the first one there and within a few hours we were about a hundred people up there. It was, it was, uh, very strange. I dunno whether you've seen the pictures of, uh, my parents sitting alone on church loft. [Clears throat] Um, we were obviously be, betrayed by, they say it was a young girl that had a fling with a German, or whatnot, what, whatever, but, uh, it was again rumours that, uh, she had, uh, told the Germans that, uh, if she want, they want some, some Jewish people then they just had to go to the church loft and, uh, early morning they're banging on the door and and, and, uh, we were led down to some, some, um, vans and, and, and, and, and then we came to this, uh, camp, Horserød, where my sister was already. So, in a way, that was a united, I mean, uh, well, my, my, my, my parents were, were, were, of course, delighted to be, to, to see their daughter again but, on the other hand, we were all imprisoned.

10:48:25:22

It wasn't bad there, I mean, in, in, in the camp there first of all. We were fed properly and we, we didn't have much clothes so they, they gave us some extra clothes and,

and, and, uh, but we were only there until the what days was that? what, uh, the 13th of, of October and,

10:48:49:13

Interviewer

At this point, were you aware of what was going on in, in wider Europe? Were you aware of concentration camps and aware of the extermination of the Jewish population?

10:48:58:16

Aron Sloma

No. No.

10:48:59:18

Interviewer

So what did you think was happening?

10:49:01:19

Aron Sloma

Well, I really don't, I didn't understand what was going on and no, none of us were really knew what was going on. Uh, I mean, the rumours had gone of, uh, uh, concentration camp hadn't, hasn't reached, reached the, the, the, the, the normal population.

10:49:27:19

Interviewer

Just as well, I suppose.

10:49:30:24

Aron Sloma

Just as well, yes, yes.

10:49:32:05

Interviewer

Mm. What happened to you next? So that camp, you said, was, was, you were in prison but it wasn't,

10:49:39:01

Aron Sloma

No, it wasn't,

10:49:39:19

Interviewer

desperate.

10:49:40:21

Aron Sloma

it wasn't, it wasn't prison, as such, but, but, I mean, we were interned [*clears throat*]

and we were there until the 13th of October. Then we were told to get our things together and we were transported to the nearest railway station where trains was waiting for us. That was a normal train. There was a, a German guard there who was, uh, actually really nice. I mean, he's, he, he said he, he was just a soldier. But, anyway,

10:50:21:23

Interviewer

Do you,

10:50:22:18

Aron Sloma

yes. Then we went on, on, on the train to the southern part of, of, of Denmark to a town called Gedser where there was a boat going to northern part of Germany, Warnemunde. So the train went straight on to the ferry and from that train we were, we were, went into, to, to [?] also, and that was quite a shock.

10:50:56:02

Interviewer

Do you, [*clears throat*] excuse me. Do you think your parents knew more than they were telling you?

10:51:08:02

Aron Sloma

Well, I, I don't know whether they knew something but ,but, uh, they, maybe they, they sort of guessed what, what was, what was happening. I mean, mostly my father. He, he was, he, he talked about it. But, I mean, I don't really think that they believed that, that it wa, was going on.

10:51:30:18

Interviewer

So you said you were put into wagons?

10:51:32:23

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:51:33:11

Interviewer

Can you describe that, please?

14:59:10:19

Aron Sloma

Well, it was flea wagons and we were treated like fleas. Now, uh, first of all there wasn't enough space for all of us just to sit on the floor [*clears throat*] so we had to take turns to sit down. There was no water. There was no toilet. There was nothing. No food, only the food we had brought with us. And it was very cold. The train stopped a few times when we could get, get off and, and empty ourselves but, apart from that - and that was only a few times - and, um, apart from that it was, was pretty horrible.

10:52:29:13

Interviewer

Do you still have flashbacks from being in that wagon?

10:52:33:12

Aron Sloma

No, I don't. But, I mean, um, later, um, I'll, I'll tell you some more about flea wagons, yeah.

10:52:42:02

Interviewer

You eventually, after, is it two or three days, arrived in Czechoslovakia, didn't you?

10:52:49:08

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Went to, yes, at Theresienstadt. [*Clears throat*]

10:52:52:19

Interviewer

So, can you say that again, please, sorry? You went to?

10:52:55:15

Aron Sloma

Theresienstadt, or Terezin as it was called. [*clears throat*]

10:53:00:13

Interviewer

Can you describe what happened when the wagons arrived?

10:53:05:24

Aron Sloma

Well, we went round, [*Clears throat*] we, the, the train went round the, right into the town and, uh, it, I mean, Tere, Terezin was a garrison, um, and there were, there were, there were some, some boats or something outside. I, I don't, don't really know how, how, why, why it was there but, anyway, it was and we were, uh, sort of asked to, to, to go in there and, uh, we had to give them all the, the valuable we had, well, not that I had any, um, but people had their wedding rings and whatever they had of, of jewellery, some, and money, they had to, to, to, to, to, to give away. And, uh, [*clears throat*] when we, we were, from there we were transported up to, to different places.

10:54:13:18

Men and women were separated. So I went with my father on the, on the left to one of the, of the garrisons, or [?] as they called them, and there were masses of people up there. We got, uh, a straw mattress that was, which was absolutely full of flies and fleas and whatnot, and, um, we had a little bit of food with us which we had to, to be very careful to, to, to, to protect because people were simply stealing from each other, like nothing I mean, they, it was, was just horrendous.

10:55:06:24

My mother [*clears throat*] and my two sisters was taken to a loft in a private house, um, where they met a Danish lady, or two Danish ladies, uh, ladies, actually, and one of the ladies, Mrs [Swanson], had a daughter which was the one that is Gestapo [U] in Helsingør said was a, should be a, a, a playmate for, for my sister. So they, they lived over there for quite a while. Uh, and then, later on, they, they were moved outside on the outskirts of Theresienstadt in some, some wooden, uh, buildings.

10:55:55:19

Interviewer

But, at this point, you didn't know how your sisters and your mother was? You were just with your father?

10:56:00:16

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Well, we, we did, we did see them but, but we weren't allowed to, to, to, to, to be with them, as such.

10:56:08:07

Interviewer

Can you describe the conditions in which you were kept? You were, you were, in your notes you've talked about the fleas and everything like that.

10:59:15:14

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

10:56:16:01

Interviewer

Can you, can you describe it?

10:56:17:19

Aron Sloma

Well, it was, I mean, there, there were, there was no, no sanitation there and, I mean, I, I was, was bitten with, with, uh, uh, specially the, the fleas the first night and I, I didn't know what to do. I, I got, I, I was itching all over the place, as, as far as I remember. It was horrible. Cause, I mean, we lived in a, in a fairly, nice flat in, in Copenhagen where, where, where we had the san, normal sanitation. But then, after a little while, my father and, and I were, we was sent downstairs in the same building, in the stables on one of these bunk beds, and whatnot, and that was, uh, well, I mean, we, I dunno how many people were there but there were [*clears throat*] lots of people there. And, uh, we, we, we stayed there for quite a while.

10:57:40:02

Interviewer

At this point more rumours must have been circulating about what was happening to Europe, and what was happening to the Jewish population? Or did you still not know what was, what was going on?

10:57:52:24

Aron Sloma

Well, I mean, [*clears throat*] it was all rumours at that point. Um, but one thing that, that s, sticks in my mind and which comes back every year, the 11th of November 1918 was, erm, what you called it? Um, not surrender day. Uh, it was, uh, I remember the Germans gave, gave in the First World War and that was co, comm, commem, commemorated so that when, we reach the 10th of November, during the night we were told to get up about four o'clock and we all went out to a field outside Theresienstadt where we simply stood all day.

10:59:05:15

Um, [*clears throat*] my, my mother, at that, that point, was very ill. She had something called [?] on, on her, her legs. She, she couldn't walk and I dunno why my father didn't come either. But my two sisters were there. So we, specially my, my, my elder sister, she was, she was more like a mother figure for us. She was absolutely fantastic. And, uh, she, she man, I mean, we, we got little piece of bread, and whatnot, to, to take, to, to eat there and she tried to, to sort of ration it a little so we had a little piece, uh, each and, and, uh, well, we just stood there in, was very cold in, in, in, November and, um, and, um, in, in the round that rea that they, yeah, yeah, it was, it was, uh, uh, what do you call it? Um, cli, climate, uh, in, continental climate, uh, and, and, and it was very, very cold and, and snow, and whatnot.

11:00:31:22

And, and that's, that, that day, uh, I, I, every year when it comes to, to, to the, uh, it sort of comes back, back to me. It was, it was something that really print itself, um, on to my mind.

11:00:46:03

Interviewer

Why that particular day?

11:00:48:07

Aron Sloma

Well, because it was, was surrender day for, for, from the First World War.

11:00:51:23

Interviewer

Talking about D-Day?

11:00:53:03

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

11:00:53:14

Interviewer

Yeah?

11:00:56:18

Aron Sloma

So, um,

11:00:58:06

Interviewer

But was that not a, a day of relief?

11:01:03:16jk

Aron Sloma

No. I mean, that was, the, the, it was, was the day when, when the Germans gave in the First World War and, therefore, we were to be punished because they had to surrender.

11:01:18:20

Interviewer

I see.

11:01:19:01

Aron Sloma

So, therefore, we had to, to, to, to stay out there from four/five o'clock in the morning to late, late, late night.

11:01:28:03

Interviewer

I see. Okay. Thank you explaining that.

11:01:31:08

Aron Sloma

And quite a few people died, died

11:01:37:09

Interviewer

Did you work while you were in the camp?

11:01:40:22

Aron Sloma

Did I?

11:01:41:09

Interviewer

Did you work?

11:01:43:05

Aron Sloma

Yes. When, when my, I, um, uh, got to 14, I was told that I should go down to something called the [?] and it was, um, by, by the railway, way out. I was, like, a messenger boy. I mean, I was only 14 so I, uh, and [clears throat] that was, uh, it was, it was okay. I mean, it wasn't hard work or anything like that but what it was, when this, when I'm thinking back of what, what, what I did here, um, was very, very dangerous because ,all the, the supply of sugar, flour, potato, coal came in to the, to, to the sta, station, or whatever you called it, and, um, it was a Danish group of boys

which were all in their 20 years.

11:02:58:00

They were, they were unloading all this, this, uh, well, um, supply and what they did was that they opened some of the sacks with flour, with sugar, and whatever, put it into small bags and I had to pick them up, put, take them into the building and then, later on, we divided it up between us. Well, as it so happens, it, it wasn't Germans that, uh, was guarding us, it was Czech gendarmes and, uh, they, they turned, turned a blind eye to it, cause they must have known that this had took place. So, uh, that gave us some, some, some, uh, some, some food.

11:04:00:08

Interviewer

You were playing a very high-risk strategy game, weren't you?

11:04:03:24

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Yeah. And,

11:04:04:19

Interviewer

But it was life or death anyway so you needed food.

15:11:41:04

Aron Sloma

Um, yeah. I mean, but I, I mean, I don't think I really, uh, realised what, what, what danger, uh, uh, because if, if a German had had, uh, got hold of me then, then, uh, I don't know what would, would have happened. Yes, I, I do know, but I can tell you about it a little later. *[Laughter]*

11:04:29:05

Interviewer

It was at this point that you saw something that you've never forgotten.

11:04:33:09

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Well, I must say that that's, I mean, this, this all happened in the summer of '44. I dunno whether that you have heard about that, um, delegation that came, came to Theresienstadt in, in June '44. Um, what happened was that in beginning of that year we were told that we were being, going to be visited by a delegation, the Red Cross delegation, um, and, uh, the town was painted in bright colours. The town square was planted up with flowers, and whatnot, and they constructed a music band, a music, uh, what do you call it? A, stand. They formed an orchestra and, uh, all the Danes, men and wife and children, were moved together. They were moved, we were moved out of the horrible place, moved into sort of more liveable accommodation, if I can say it that way, *[Laughter]* and, uh, *[clears throat]* we had normal beds to sleep in and, um, it was like, like an old shop with big, big room where I was in, uh, set up together with my parents and my, younger sister, together with three or four other families, um, and round the corner there was a shower room, the, just with cold shower but I was able to have a shower in between, which was a

novelty.

11:06:46:19

So, at that point, we lived a different, different life. Because not only could I bring things back from, sugar and flour, and whatnot, from, from, from the, um, railway station, but also we started to get some parcels from Red Cross. That all happened in end of December 1943. I think we were some of the last ones that got, uh, but all the other Danes got one Red Cross parcel per month for each person. Now, these parcels were lifesavers. As simple as that. They contained butter, sugar, vitamin pills. I mean, you name it, it, everything that, that, that you really, really needed and we. for instance, uh, one pound of butter. You could buy bread on the flourishing black market. You could buy anything. At one point my mother came back with some steaks. So it, it was, completely changed our lives. And, I mean, we ... we got so much, I mean, you can imagine, there were five of us. We got a parcel like that, like, say, five pound of butters a, a month and five pound of sugar, and whatnot. So, so that was more than, than enough, so we could exchange for other stuff and also, um, we could give to someone, the, the people around us. Mm.

11:08:49:10

Interviewer

How, how long did you benefit from this show of what was going on to the Red Cross? Was it just a temporary measure or was it for a long period?

11:08:57:02

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Yeah. They, they came, I don't remember what date. It was in June. They were only there for a few hours and the whole thing was a complete show off.

11:09:08:17

Interviewer

And were you just not able to talk to anybody, to explain to them,

11:09:10:21

Aron Sloma

No. We weren't allowed to so, talk to them. No, no. Um,

11:09:15:04

Interviewer

So it was just a big charade?

11:09:17:09

Aron Sloma

Yeah, it was. And, I mean, later on when, when, when we, we, uh, uh, came back and we talked about it, we got to know, these people, I mean, there were, there were people from Switzerland from Red Cross and there were people from Sweden and, uh, they thought it, we, we lived a, a fantastic life down there.

11:09:41:00

Interviewer

And the reality was that 7,000 members of the population had been shipped off to Auschwitz before to make sure that it wasn't over-populated, isn't that right?

11:09:50:04

Aron Sloma

Well, well, that, that's a different story. No, that's . that was more than that. In, uh, September, maybe in August, I don't, uh, remember exactly what, when, what, they started to transport people away every day. Being a I, a staff down by the railway I was down there all the time. I had to direct people on to the flea wagons and there was, a lorry man that, that specially that, uh, was closing and, and, uh, sealed a way away, every car that went away. But I mean, they, they were, they were simply starting their life like, like fleas.

11:10:45:08

Interviewer

Sorry, can I ask you to tell me all that again, that last bit? So because you were working on the railways you helped to, huh, people to get into the flea wagons that were going to Auschwitz?

11:10:56:05

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Yeah. Yes, I was, I was, um,

11:10:57:13

Interviewer

[*Clears throat*] Can, can you explain that, please?

11:11:00:11

Aron Sloma

Well, because, [*Clears throat*] I mean, they, they, people were called in during the night and then they were, uh, sort of, uh, held up in, in, in, in one of the, these, uh, old, uh, garrison buildings and then the train came up, uh, and then during, during the morning all these people came out of, of, of, of the building and were simply, they were called off names, and whatnot. They had [*mic. rustle*] big, uh, name tags on them and then they had to go on to the train, and they simply, well, we had to stuff them in there because they, they, they, they. I don't even remember whether they counted the people or they just kept on pushing, pushing people in and then they just closed the door and sealed it, sealed the door. 65,000 people were transported away during September and October.

11:12:12:18

And I remember there was a little Dutch boy, which I have related to, and we were both small – he's the same age – and I had to say goodbye to him, and it was heartbreaking.

11:12:33:08

And, at that time, there were, and we didn't see a lot of the Germans. It was mostly, uh, the Czech gendarmes. But then the Germans came up and they were sitting, I don't remember, four, five of them, chairs and, uh, they were sitting there, smoking and chatting away, and then they had, uh, they got some entertainment. There was

a, a Danish entertainer which they are to, ask to, him, they asked him to come down and entertain and he, uh, I mean, he, he was a strange bloke but, um, he, he was, he sang soprano, this, uh, bloke, and, and, and, uh, they thought he was so funny, so he had to, to perform in front of them. That was the impression that got, that's, that's how they regarded. This was just a big show for, for, for, for, for the Germans.

[Cut for card change]

11:13:45:11

Interviewer

[...] you offer such a unique perspective on, on what it must have been like for people to go on a transport, so are you able to, to carry on discussing this a little bit longer?

11:13:57:09

Aron Sloma

Well, [*clears throat*] yeah, I mean we, we knew at that point that they were going east towards Poland. We didn't know exactly Auschwitz and later on we, we realised that's where they were going; but we knew that, that they were transported, somewhere in Poland. What was going to happen to them we, we didn't know. What we did know was that, at one point they have sorted out some people that had an incurable illness, or mental state wasn't, in other words they were, they were taken away separately and the rumours were that there were just taken outside for reasons that, taken their lives and they was, they were killed one way or other. They talked about gas and they talked about shooting, and whatever, but that, I mean that was all rumours. But we did see that there was only one or two wagons that went away like that where the big transport there were maybe 20, 30 wagons altogether in each, each, er, sent off.

11:15:52:08

Interviewer

What prevented you from being put onto one of those wagons?

11:15:57:05

Aron Sloma

It, well that was quite odd and we didn't know it by then but we were told that the Danes were, er, that we, we, were what do you call it, er,

[Cut for camera]

11:16:15:23

Aron Sloma

I mean that, that, that, we, we, were, protected. We didn't know why but several times they say it well we just need another contingent of four, five other people, why don't we take all the Danes and put them on, and the Germans said no. You can't touch the Danish people. At that point we didn't, didn't know why, or how, but I mean,

at least we, we were still alive.

11:16:59:07

Interviewer

So simply because you were Danish you were spared, but they set you to work. You, you were helping them with their system. So what exactly was your job? What time did you have to get to the station, what did you do?

11:17:13:12

Aron Sloma

I was like, like a messenger boy.

11:17:15:22

Interviewer

What time did you get there in the morning?

11:17:17:19

Aron Sloma

Well, I mean I just walk down there, er, I don't remember what time it was but it must have been sort of eight, nine o'clock and then, and, er, until late afternoon.

11:17:30:00

Interviewer

And you say you were a messenger boy but your job eventually came, became helping to put people onto the transport, is that right? How many transports do you think you were involved in?

11:17:41:04

Aron Sloma

Well I mean it, it went on for at least a couple of months, one every day.

11:17:51:14

Interviewer

And almost everybody who went on that transport most likely died. Is that right?

11:17:57:03

Aron Sloma

That, they went to Auschwitz as far as we know, yes. I mean it, it depends on how the. I mean they, they sifted, they divided up people up in, in two lines - that's we got to know later on - people lined up in two, two rows, one there were worker, still able to work and some that were, that went straight into the gas chambers.

11:18:28:14

Interviewer

You're talking about Auschwitz, but I'm just thinking about the process that you were

involved in.

11:18:33:02

Aron Sloma

Yeah, me, now, we, we just, we just had to shift them onto, onto the wagon then off they went, that was all we, we, we did all we were asked to do.

11:18:45:06

Interviewer

How many of you were there that were helping them get onto the wagons?

11:18:48:12

Aron Sloma

That's quite, I mean all the Danish boys that were unloading were there and, um, then the, there was especially, I think he was Czech. He was the one that seals the, the wagon. I can still see him from, for me, he had a special green coat. *[Laughs]* And he went round and closed the doors and then sealed them.

11:19:17:16

Interviewer

When you say sealed, what do you mean?

11:19:19:22

Aron Sloma

Well, they, they, he, he put some, I mean it was like, like a, um, like a seal. He put, er, I mean the actual lock on the door it went down, and then it was, was, um, oh how can I explain this?

11:19:42:18

Aron Sloma

The lock had like a finger with a hole in and then they put, put, er, a lock or something onto there so they couldn't open the doors.

11:19:55:06

Interviewer

Do you remember the atmosphere, what it was like on the, on the station platform? What were people saying or feeling as they were,

11:20:04:05

Aron Sloma

I mean people, people were crying and there were, were. I mean some people were hysterical and understand this situation, but, um, I mean nobody took notice of them, they, they just pushed them onto, onto the train.

11:20:24:00

Interviewer

It must be very hard for you to reflect on that part of your life.

11:20:27:21

Aron Sloma

Yes. It was, it, it keeps swirling round when, when I think back on it. Yeah, I'm, I, how I could do that I don't understand. because I mean, these were people I knew - some of them - and, and, um, and you knew that, I mean we had been through the same sort of journey when we came to Theresienstadt. we knew how horrible it was on these flea wagons, with no sanitation nothing, hardly any, any room to, to sit anywhere. Yes it's, it was, it was horrendous. It was absolute, I mean I, I just cannot still imagine what it was like because at that point I knew what it was like.

11:21:17:19

Interviewer

You had no choice but to help.

11:21:20:05

Aron Sloma

Yes, oh no, I was not, no, no question about do you want to or not. It was just do this.

11:21:30:11

Interviewer

How have you come to terms with that later on in your life?

15:34:49:00

Aron Sloma

Well, when I think back on it then I, I get horrified, I mean that's, in a way I don't understand I could do it but on the other hand there was no choice.

11:21:52:23

Interviewer

Do you mind telling me the story again of, of the boy who was your age, because that, as we were speaking before we started filming, history is told through individuals, isn't it? And even though you were witness to many hundreds and thousands of people who got onto the flea wagon, there is one that stays in your mind.

11:22:13:14

Aron Sloma

Yes, because we, we were close friends. And we met and we, we, sort of played together because he was similar age to me and, um, he was, it was just heart-breaking to say, say goodbye to him.

11:22:35:19

Interviewer

What was his name?

11:22:37:07

Aron Sloma

I don't remember.

11:22:39:13

Interviewer

You remember his face?

11:22:41:03

Aron Sloma

I remember his face and I knew he; he came from Holland; and, um, I mean he spoke Dutch and I spoke whatever to him, and I picked up so, yeah, I mean it was like two 14-year-old boys that just played a little and then, and, um, we chatted away.

11:23:09:16

Interviewer

Do you ever look back and, and worry that you could have done something to help anybody? Or do you just know that you couldn't?

11:23:17:01

Aron Sloma

You, you couldn't help anybody, because these people were rounded up during the night and put into this, this building next to the, the railway station and, er, when it came to the morning, then they just open the door and then they, like, like fleas they were, they were, were, taken out, out to the train. I mean the, the distance between the building and, and in the train was already about 15, 20 feet or something like that.

11:23:55:11

Interviewer

Did any of them plead with you to help them?

11:23:58:15

Aron Sloma

No. They knew that they, they couldn't, we couldn't help them. Cause the Germans were standing there.

11:24:13:11

Interviewer

It's horrendous to think of it.

11:24:16:09

Aron Sloma

Well, um, [*clears throat*] you mentioned before the, they, um, the terrible experience I had yes.

11:24:29:01

There was as, as I said, a flourishing black market in Theresienstadt and one of the Danish boys had tried to sell cigarettes on the black market down there and was caught. And, er, that was punished. He was sent out to, there was a camp outside Theresienstadt that was not connected to, it was a political camp called **Kleine Festung**.

11:25:11:23

Aron Sloma

And being a member of the staff down at, at the, the railway I was told together with an elderly man to take all his belongings from Theresienstadt to Kleine Festung. It was only walking distance, so I sent down to us the walk. It took about, oh, if I remember rightly something reasonable, half an hour to walk there. And we came into this, this camp and that was a real death camp because [*clears throat*] in the, in the, the yard there were, prisoners standing. First of all they were, they were dressed in, in, in striped suits. They were standing around there. I don't know how many but 10, 20 or whatever, with the face to the wall and the Germans were marching up and down with a rifle and if they moved then they just got shot them.

11:26:32:03

And then we had to deliver this stuff to, to this. We, we didn't see, see this, this man but on the way to where we had to deliver we passed a crematorium and that was first time in my life I have seen a body. But not one body, there was a whole stack of them and I, I can still see that in front of me. This, the whole stack of, of, of bodies laying there and I could see the crematorium burning and the smell from the, from the smoke that came out.

11:27:20:09

Interviewer

So the, the young boy who had traded the cigarettes, what happened to him?

11:27:26:00

Aron Sloma

Um, well I mean he was liberated later on and he, he came back through to the rest of things.

11:27:33:19

Interviewer

But the men that were lined up, and if they moved, eventually they must all have moved.

11:27:40:10

Aron Sloma

Yeah, of, I don't know whether they forgave it, forgave it,

11:27:44:03

Interviewer

But it was a warning, it was a warning.

11:27:45:19

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

11:27:47:19

Interviewer

And at that point you knew that you had to fulfil their wishes otherwise you would be shot like that too most likely. So you must have been in terrible fear.

11:27:55:17

Aron Sloma

Yeah, it was, it was absolutely horrifying.

11:28:01:00

Interviewer

Before we move on, is there anything else about that period that you want to share with me, or anything else that you can remember about what you had to do, or how you felt, or what you feared? Any individuals or what somebody said to you, or, because there's, I haven't ever spoken to anybody who was involved in, in putting people on the wagons, that must make you feel terrible.

11:28:27:02

Aron Sloma

Yeah. It was, it was something that, that sometimes I could, can, I, I wouldn't say I, I've got nightmare about it but I do think about it sometimes because it was a horror, horrible experience.

11:28:46:15

Interviewer

Yes. I can't imagine how that must feel.

11:28:50:11

Aron Sloma

No, it's a no. I mean when I think back on it I, I can't imagine myself even that I, I took part in this.

11:28:59:00

Interviewer

But you were forced, it wasn't as if you had a choice.

11:29:01:04

Aron Sloma

Yes, yes, I know, I was only a child, I was only 14.

11:29:11:06

Aron Sloma

Yeah [*long pause*]

11:29:17:10

Aron Sloma

But, at the same time there was some, what shall I say, some, some light points in my life. When we first of all the whole family were even together at that point.

11:29:34:08

Aron Sloma

We had plenty of food.

11:29:41:01

Aron Sloma

And the top, on top of that, together with that, elderly man that I went to the Kleine Feistung with, we had a little like a toy, toy, er, you know sometimes you see in Norway in kindergarten that the, the transport children you, a, four-wheel, something, a little wooden thing like that, we had one like that. So we put a whole sack of potatoes, a whole sack of coal sometimes, and we took them back to where we lived and put them under the bed. I mean again thinking back on it, I mean, I, I might have to gone to Kleine Feistung if, if people had caught me. But somehow we, we, managed to enter in, I probably found it quite, quite exciting to, to steal like that. [laughs] I did.

11:30:53:00

Interviewer

Absolutely. [*Coughs*] May I ask you, before we talk about your release from Theresienstadt, can you just tell me, I was a bit confused about D-Day and, um, the, the way that the Germans marked the end of the first world war and their humiliation. Can you, can you tell me that story again about having to stand outside.

11:31:11:10

Aron Sloma

Well, I mean, the, the 11th November 1918 the Germans surrendered and to commem, commem, commemorate that day and punish us - because somebody had to be punished for that - they asked us to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and we were marched out to a field outside Theresienstadt, where we were just standing. Nothing happened, we were just standing there, from early morning to late night. Bitterly cold and starving hunger, but we got a little bit of bread but, er, that was eaten within five minutes. And just stood there all day.

11:32:07:18

Interviewer

On 11th November?

11:32:07:23

Aron Sloma

Yeah. 1944.

11:32:13:12

Interviewer

Thank-you. Um, let's talk about when you were released - unless there's anything else you want to share about your time there, any other memories and then,

11:32:24:10

Aron Sloma

Well, I mean [*clears throat*] I was, um, [*clears throat*] at one point I had, I had was terribly ill, I had dipterita, dip, diptritis, is that what you call it? Now, I simply couldn't hold anything in, inside me, it went right through me and I remember [*clears throat*] my mother came to see me and she nearly fainted on the spot because she said I looked more, more dead like alive. But somehow I survived and, er, she fed me so I got some strength back and, and I was, sort of back to, to normal so to speak, um, after a little while. That was one horrendous thing that happened.

11:33:26:17

Um, then I lived, at that point I was went into a special building called Jugend, Jugendtor, like a, um, for young, young boys and, um, I lived there together with another Danish boy, and, er, he, he was a playing the trumpet in that orchestra that, so he had a, we had a laugh about that. Um, you know I told you about this music stand that was created in the middle of 44 and he was one of them, of the main core orchestra there.

11:34:24:11

Interviewer

Can we move on? Are you, Yeah, thank you. Um, 15th April 1945 [*coughs*] the release from Theresienstadt. You were 14 years old. How did you hear that you might be released?

11:34:39:07

Aron Sloma

Well, [*clears throat*] a few days beforehand there were rumours that we were going to be sent away. We didn't know what, that meant, having been part of the sending of people in field wagons then we thought maybe that was what happened, would happen now. But then they said that we were going to be picked up and sent back to our home country [*clears throat*] and it wasn't until, 15th April that we, when we were hushed out to this waiting white buses that we realised what was going on and, and only when the drivers started to talk to us in Swedish and told us just relax, we are going to bring you back to, to Denmark and Sweden, did we believe what was going on.

11:36:00:17

Aron Sloma

That was quite phew, quite a, a strange, strange feeling.

11:36:05:16

Interviewer

To have experienced some kindness after so much deprivation. And yet, your, your whole family was still alive and still together. And that's against all odds, really, isn't it?

11:36:18:07

Aron Sloma

Yeah, all the family was.

11:36:20:01

Interviewer

It was extraordinary.

11:36:20:24

Aron Sloma

Yeah. I mean there were people standing, non, non, all non-Danes so to speak, they were standing there saying you lucky, lucky people, you're getting out of here.

11:36:33:20

Interviewer

And you were lucky.

11:36:36:10

Aron Sloma

Yeah, we were.

11:36:37:16

Interviewer

What happened next?

11:36:39:22

Aron Sloma

Well, [*clears throat*] we came on the buses and I remember we were fed chocolate for the first time and I mean something that sticks in my mind [*laughs*] um, then we went away and I suppose have you heard about the bombing of Dresden, that the Royal Air Force? That happened that night. So when we passed that part of Germany, you went up, sort of on a ring road, round Dresden, we were told to draw the curtains on the, on the bus, cause we weren't allowed to look what was going on, but of course we had to peep, and we could see it was absolutely inferno. It was the whole town was on fire, it was horrendous to, to, just to watch it. But on other hand we said well, they probably deserved it. I mean we didn't know anything else at that

time.

11:37:52:05

So [*clears throat*] we went from there, we went to, er, Potsdam, which is like a suburb to Berlin. We stayed in the woods there and we could hear bombing and what not goes on but, um, on other hand, there was not much we could do, and the following morning we went through and ended up in a town called [*Tønder?*] in Denmark. Now, what we were told was that we were lucky to have gone through because during that night the American and the Russian army met and they simply closed ranks so nobody could get through. So we were simply lucky that, that just that little gap, a few hours, when the buses went through and then we arrived in, in Denmark safely.

11:39:01:01

Interviewer

That must have been an amazing experience. And the Red Cross looked after you very well at that point, didn't they? What did they do?

11:39:07:14

Aron Sloma

Well, yeah, I mean, when we, in Denmark, we, we first of all we, we were offered hot soup [*laughs*] which we haven't had for, for years, and, er, I mean we, we were treated like heroes, they threw everything at us and, er, yes it was, was wonderful.

11:39:36:09

Interviewer

Given clean clothes?

11:39:39:02

Aron Sloma

Yes, we had a bath, a shower, and, and we had some, some clean underwear which was absolutely luxury. And, um, we, we stayed in the bus and then we, we went on from there [*clears throat*] and the following day we went to Odense that's a town, if you heard about Hans Christian Anderson, then, [*laughs*] that's where he was from, um, on the way there, we heard some airplanes flying over our heads and we were told later on that the Royal Air Force had bombed the German headquarters in Copenhagen, which was absolutely, er, fantastic, in the way that it's, um, you see that they, they had occupied a big building in the middle of Copenhagen, but they had headquarters on top and in the basement they had prisoners. Now, Royal Air Force was able to bomb the building without harming any of the prisoners in the basement. So that was, was incredible.

11:41:05:05

Interviewer

That was very amazing. You had typhus for a while, didn't you? You had typhus?

11:41:11:11

Aron Sloma

Yes, we, went to, to, from, we stayed there in Odense all night and then we, the following day we went to Copenhagen where we went on the, on the boat from Copenhagen to Malmo in Sweden, and, er, we were greeted there by, because there were quite a lot of Danes living there and then we were transported into another camp, in Sweden. And that was, er, must say a little bit of a shock, but on other hand they said well we had to go into some sort of quarantine because they didn't know whether we were, we could pass something onto the Swedish people. Looking back on it, that time, it wasn't, wasn't that bad at all, I mean it was quite sensible.

11:42:09:12

And what they did as well was that they examined us medically and, er, they found out that, er, some of us had, was carrying bacteria from de, deep, diphteris, I don't know the name in English. Typhus, yes, must have been. So we were sent to a hospital in a little town called [*Swedish name*] just far from the, not very far from the camp, and, um, what do you call it, epidemic department. I was the youngest one and I was treated like, like a baby [*Laughs*].

11:43:05:11

Interviewer

You deserved some kindness after everything that you had been through.

11:43:09:00

Aron Sloma

Yeah, yeah, I mean there were supposed to be two nurses there, they treated me like, like a, I mean they weren't that old themselves, I mean they must have been maybe in their, their early 20s and I was then 15 at that point. But, um, I remember they called me the, our little gold, gold coin, or something like that [*Laughs*] So I had special treatment and, and, er, I was spoiled rotten and yes, it was wonderful.

11:43:43:07

Interviewer

So you were nursed back to health physically, but what about mentally? Everything that you'd been through. Were you ever able to get any assistance and help to process what you'd been through?

11:43:55:11

Aron Sloma

No, not, not at all.

11:43:57:10

Interviewer

And, even up to now you've never done that?

11:43:59:08

Aron Sloma

No.

11:44:00:12

Interviewer

How have you coped?

11:44:02:07

Aron Sloma

Well, I suppose I'm, got some difficulties sometimes behaving strangely, but apart from that I, I seem to have survived alright.

11:44:14:09

Interviewer

How, excuse me, how long do you feel it took before you, kind of had a normal life again?

11:44:25:11

Aron Sloma

Well [*clears throat*] I was in hospital for, for I think it was three weeks, and then I went back to the camp, to my parents and my sister, er, sisters, and then we went to: you remember I told you an uncle that was non-Jewish that, that his brother was taken by my, my younger sister? They lived in a little town called [*Swedish name*] in not far away, so they arranged for us to live there for a little while.

11:45:02:05

Aron Sloma

And we, we visited [*clears throat*] my mother's eldest brother in Stockholm, but that was a very short, just a, a day trip. But we stayed there until, must have been about until June 45. And then we went back to, to Denmark.

11:45:36:23

Aron Sloma

Um, and we lived with this brother of, that uncle I talked about and his wife. For a couple of months, or something like that.

11:45:50:18

Aron Sloma

And then my parents got a new flat outside, outside of Copenhagen. It was horrible place but then the flat was fine. At that point [*clears throat*] they got all their belongings back. Now this, this greengrocer, he had arranged everything to be stored so much so that my, my father was, was mad about collecting soap because it was, it was very difficult to get the last few years in Denmark, so he had a shoebox with some soap. Even that box was there full of soap. Every little bit of, [*coughing off camera*] of their house was packed [*coughing off camera*]

11:46:43:18

Aron Sloma

So every little bit was packed, transported out to the new flat and they had a, a

complete home back and

11:46:56:17

Interviewer

How wonderful that there was somebody who offered kindness. After so much difficulty.

11:47:00:21

Aron Sloma

Yeah. Yeah, they were fantastic, those people.

11:47:05:06

Interviewer

Do you believe in God?

11:47:07:23

Aron Sloma

No.

11:47:08:22

Interviewer

Why?

11:47:10:15

Aron Sloma

If there's a God, then there couldn't, they couldn't have allowed it, what happened during the war. Couldn't have, couldn't allow what happened today everywhere.

11:47:27:15

Interviewer

Do you remember seeking a God at that time when you were in the camps?

11:47:35:00

Aron Sloma

No.

11:47:38:04

Aron Sloma

Well I mean, we were, as I told you before we, we weren't brought up religious in that way so, so it's, um, for me God was, wasn't part of my life, so to speak.

11:47:53:20

Interviewer

It's interesting cause a lot of people who, who don't believe in God, at a time when their life is in question, they still turn to a God. But I'm, I'm interested to hear that you didn't.

11:48:03:17

Aron Sloma

Yeah, well. I mean I can understand that and, and, er, in a way it's a, it's probably quite, quite human to, to, to have something to, to, to hang onto. But that you believe it or not that's, that's another question.

11:48:25:14

Interviewer

I understand that, that you became very withdrawn. Even though your life had started again as it were. How do you feel you managed to carry on, because you ended up becoming very successful. You got your education; you had your own family?

11:48:45:18

Aron Sloma

Well, I was lucky in a sense. When, you see, I've been as I told you, I attended a Jewish boys' school in Copenhagen from eight, seven, to 13.

11:49:05:02

Aron Sloma

And I was sent to a mixed boys and girls school in, in Copenhagen, and that was first time I've been, been with girls. In that way. I mean it's, it's a, it was a very, very nice crowd. They really took me in. I don't know whether it was because they were nosey about what had happened to me, whatever, but we had a very rich social life that year. Only was there one year in that, that school. Er, so much so that I, I met them a few times since then and, er, yes it was, was, er, it was so like coming more to, I mean a pos, a very positive part and I mean one of the things that was very funny, every time I met them since, it was quite a few years ago that I saw them so last time, they talked about how good I was to, to write all the German essays [*laughs*] because they, I was, I was perfect in German at that time.

11:50:29:14

Interviewer

But in a sense that brought you back to life, that experience?

11:50:32:18

Aron Sloma

Yeah, yeah. It was, it was, um, I mean, I think that it is the happiest schooldays I have every had in my whole life. That year. Just one year.

11:50:47:12

Interviewer

It must have been so much turmoil and relief in your mind, though, about the fact that you'd been through so much and you'd survived and your family had survived and you were able to start your life again.

11:50:58:16

Aron Sloma

Yeah.

11:51:03:22

Interviewer

We kind of covered all the main parts of your story now, and it's been very, um, emotional listening to everything that you've been through. And you seem so, um, calm and balanced about what you've experienced in your life.

11:51:23:16

Aron Sloma

Yeah, I mean it's, it's, I mean first of all I have been through a few interviews now so I have been through all this before [*clears throat*] but also I have got the attitude that, well, life must, must go on. I have been, as you say yes I have been really lucky, I got a very good education, I, I had a marriage, which, alright, failed, but I mean I had a marriage and I had two, two lovely child, kids

[Cut for direction]

11:52:00:21

Interviewer

You were saying how you ended up, you were success, well, I'm saying that you were successful, you didn't say that you were successful but you had a successful career, a marriage, two children. And you've got to a point in your life now where you can reflect on everything that you've been through.

11:52:20:04

Aron Sloma

I've still got my daughter and son-in-law, and my three grandchildren.

11:52:30:02

Aron Sloma

And now she has, she has got two, two grandchildren. One of them the oldest one is 30 and he's got a little boy so she is the grandmother. It's wonderful.

11:52:46:08

Interviewer

So you can see that the process of life is starting again, which must be replenishing and renewing for you?

11:52:53:02

Aron Sloma

Absolutely. Absolutely.

11:52:55:23

Interviewer

Is there anything that you regret in your life?

11:53:03:22

Aron Sloma

Yes.

11:53:06:15

Aron Sloma

I, I regret very much that I didn't try to force my son out of, of, of where he was living and the life he was living. I tried but not hard enough. And that is something that will really haunt me.

11:53:32:05

Interviewer

Of course, cause you know what happened, but at the time you have to let people live their life, don't you?

11:53:37:21

Aron Sloma

Yes, exactly, I mean that's, that's, I mean it was his choice, but I felt somewhere it wasn't right but I didn't push it hard enough to, to convince him that I thought it was, was the wrong, that's hard, hard to take in.

11:54:03:18

Interviewer

Well it seems especially cruel after everything that you've been through, that you would then lose him. It does seem very, very cruel. But life as we all know is not fair always.

11:54:15:01

Aron Sloma

It's not very fair, no.

11:54:18:02

Interviewer

Now that we've reached the end of this part of the, the interview, how do you feel now that we've spoken?

11:54:28:21

Aron Sloma

Well, I feel, feel quite calm, calm about it. But, er, and, well, I can only say that if I can contribute somehow to something positive with it, then yes, that's, I'm pleased about.

11:54:47:18

Interviewer

Is there anything, in preparation for this discussion, that you thought that you would be asked and I haven't asked you?

11:54:55:08

Aron Sloma

No.

11:54:57:15

Interviewer

Is there anything else that you would like to say?

11:55:01:19

Aron Sloma

Well, I think that, that somebody asked, asked me a few times, whether, what my attitude to, to the Germans are. And I said before, I could never, ever forgive the Nazis for what they were doing, and nobody is telling me that most people in Germany didn't know what goes on. Because I mean they could see it all happen.

11:55:33:00

Aron Sloma

What I can do, I can tell the younger generation in Germany whose parents and grandparents were doing all this, that I don't bear a grudge to them because they weren't part of it. It wasn't their fault that it happened, and therefore life must go on, although every time I hear German, I get the creeps.

11:56:12:20

Interviewer

And to return to the question I asked you at the beginning, about a message, you said you didn't want to lecture. But is there anything, now that we've gone through your story again that you feel that you might want to share?

11:56:28:14

Aron Sloma

Well I mean, before I got here, I did go to the Holocaust Centre in Nottingham.

11:56:35:23

Interviewer

To Beth Shalom?

11:56:37:10

Aron Sloma

Beth Shalom, yeah. And I've given quite a few speeches of there to youngsters, but,

um, in later years I haven't done it, I haven't felt like I was strong enough to do it, um, but I mean I did, I, I did feel that I gave something, you know? And certainly the response I got from a lot of the young, youngsters, and especially from the teachers, that were, came with the youngsters, were very, very positive.

11:57:17:04

Aron Sloma

So that was, that's, that was the nice part of it.

11:57:21:04

Interviewer

Well, can I just add my thanks to you, because the interview that you have just given is extremely powerful and you've spoken so eloquently and, um, so clearly about what happened, I feel like I've been through your journey with a great deal of clarity. And I know it's hard to talk about it, but, um, you're doing it for a reason and we're very grateful that you chose to say yes. So thank-you very much.

11:57:48:13

Aron Sloma

Well, thank-you - hope you feel better soon [*laughs*]

11:57:52:05

Interviewer

I'm sorry that I interrupted us every now and again.

11:57:54:11

Aron Sloma

Well, that's alright.

11:57:56:12

Interviewer

Thank you [...]

END OF INTERVIEW

ARTEFACTS

ARTEFACT 1: Aron's parents' wedding photograph

11:58:00:07

Aron Sloma

[...] this is a picture of my parents at their wedding day in October 1925. They were married until they both died. My, my my er father died in 1988 and my mother died in 1990. [...] they were married for 63 years from October 1925 to 1988.

ARTEFACT 2: Aron on his mother Kaja's lap, elder sister standing on the left

11:58:45:08

Aron Sloma

This is a picture of my mother. I'm sitting on her lap as a baby and my elder sister standing next to her. It will probably have been taken in 1931. My mother's name was Kaja: K A J A.

ARTEFACT 3: photo of Aron aged 'about six', his elder sister, and his younger sister

11:59:13:04

Aron Sloma

This is a picture taken in Copenhagen of my elder sister, my younger sister and me. I would guess it's taken in 1936 as my younger sister is born in 1935. So I would have been about six and my elder sister would have been about ten.

ARTEFACT 4: photo of Aron's grandparents in 1948

11:59:42:11

Aron Sloma

This is a photograph of my grandparents from my mother's side, taken in Copenhagen after they came back from Sweden in 1948.

ARTEFACT 5: photo taken in the 1960s of Aron's parents in the loft of the church at Gillelje

11:59:55:13

Aron Sloma

This is a picture of my parents and the church loft in Gillelje in North Zealand. Taken together with an article that was sent in a Danish newspaper in the '60s. 1960s. The paper brought them up there and interviewed them on the spot.