

# Molly Nagel Interview

## January 4, 2000

Harold Edelbaum interviewing Molly Nagel at her home at 32 West 82nd Street, Kansas City, Missouri. Today is January 4th, the year 2000. Molly, what was your name at birth? What name were you given at birth?

**Malka.**

Malka?

**Malka Kopec. Kopec.**

Okay. Did you have a middle name?

**No.**

No middle name?

**No.**

Okay. Now, when were you born? What's your birth date?

**That's, that's a hard question.**

Do you know what -- do you kind of -- do you have to guess at it?

**It was -- I, I registered here in 19- -- about 82 years ago.**

Okay. Do you have a date that you celebrated as your birthday?

**No. Only one we made up.**

Okay.

**Everything is destroyed...**

Right.

**...by Hitler.**

Okay. So 82 -- so about 1918?

**'18, yeah. 1918.**

Okay. And what city were you born in?

**Rózan.**

Rózan?

**Rózan-nad-Narwią. The name, Rózan. Like here the Mississippi River? Is Narew River** [pronounced "Narva"]. **Narew River. Narew-im-Bug fall down in Vaydl [sic: Vaysl] – in Vaysl. In Warsaw.** [Vaysl is the Yiddish name for the Vistula River. Mrs. Nagel is referring to the fact that the Narew River is a tributary of the Vistula River. Rózan, her town, is situated on the banks of the Narew about 75 km north of Warsaw.]

Warsaw?

**Yeah.**

Uh-huh.

**Together.**

So you were born in Poland?

**In Poland.**

Okay.

**Stayed Warsaw.**

What do you know about the circumstances of your birth? Were you born at home or in a hospital? Who was there?

**Oh, we born at home. Who had in a hospital this time? It was no – home, in home.**

Okay. Who was there? Who delivered you? The doctor or a nurse? Or your...

**The nurse. The nurse. Special woman was there.**

Like a midwife?

**Midwife.**

Okay. Okay. Do you have brothers and sisters?

**Yes.**

Were they there or do you know?

**My brothers -- there was Harry, Fievel --**

Are they older or younger than you?

**Older.**

Okay.

**They are older and some younger too.**

Oh, okay.

**Yeah. Three older brothers and one older sister.**

Okay.

**Four children.**

So three older brothers and --

**Three older brothers and a older sister.**

Okay.

**Two years older from me.**

And you? So there's five?

**Yeah, five. And another brother was six.**

Okay.

**Six children.**

All right. Were they all --

**And the war broke out.**

Okay. Were you all born in the same town?

**Yes.**

Okay. What were your parents' names? Your mother and father's names?

**My mother's name is Bleema Rivka Kopec. And mine dad, Yankel Kopec.**

Is what?

**Jack.**

Jack?

**Yankel.**

Yankel? Uh-huh. All right. And I understand your father owned a grain company.

**A grain company. Yeah.**

Okay. And your mother -- what did your mother do? Did she help out?

**My mother help out in the business.**

Okay.

**We all helpin' out. In Europe is a style, the children, with the mother and father, everybody works in the business.**

Okay.

**In the grain business.**

Were there any other occupations within the family?

**No.**

Besides the grain company?

**No.**

Okay.

**Flour mill – a flour mill.**

The flour mill?

**Uh-huh.**

Okay. And that was in your hometown?

**Yes.**

Okay. Can you describe the members of your family? Describe your mom and dad and your brothers and sisters.

**Oh, yeah.**

How they --

**My father was a --**

How they were.

**...market [unclear but referring to grain commodities] in Warsaw. Like here the market [unclear], you know, in stock market -- same thing -- like Greenspan.**

Okay. Like Greenspan?

**Yeah. Like Greenspan. My father was like Greenspan.**

Oh.

**Yeah.**

Okay. Your brothers and sisters were -- you said they --

**Working -- everybody worked together.**

Just everybody worked in the mill?

**Yeah.**

All right.

**Working the grain business.**

Okay. What kind of neighborhood did you live in?

**Oh, we lived in a Gentile neighborhood.**

Mostly Gentile?

**Mostly Gentile.**

Okay.

**Mostly Gentile. Now around there was Jewish people. The city was like this -- it was around 3 million. I'll show you a picture.**

Was it a nice neighborhood -- nicer neighborhood?

**Oh, there was not -- we didn't have bad neighbors. We all had good neighbors. Jewish people live in a good neighborhood. All the Jewish people together from around the city. See this is the church. Here was a market and around the market was Jewish homes and everybody lives in the Jewish homes and everywhere in the market.**

Okay.

**Targ -- they call it *targem*. My niece call and I tell her how to call because I know better than she. She was a baby when she left Poland.**

Can you describe the street that you lived on, what it was it like? Describe the street.

**That was close to the church -- the street.**

Now, how many synagogues were there?

**One synagogue.**

One synagogue?

**Now wait a minute. There was general *minyans* like *shtiebel* -- a *shtiebel*. Yeah, I'll explain. There was a Rozaminer *shtiebel*. There was a Gerrer *shtiebel*. Was Alexander *shtiebel*. There was lots of separate. It was a big synagogue. A big synagogue with all the people to the synagogue.**

Okay.

**Yeah. Was one synagogue -- a big one. And was little small synagogues. My father used to own five *sefer torahs*. Used to own the Rozaminer *shtiebel*.**

Wow. Okay. What kind of things did you have in your home? What kind of items, household items did you have? Anything --

**We had a big home and we have a dining room, living room, our office room and we had bedrooms. And upstairs we had porter rooms.**

You had what?

**We rented out. A, a duplex.**

Oh, so you rented that out?

**Uh-huh.**

Oh, great! Okay. Did you have any fancy appliances that maybe some other people wouldn't have? Anything...

**No, we didn't.**

Did you have maids?

**No.**

No servants?

**We had -- yes. We had servants that come to clean the house, like here.**

Okay. And did you own land? You had...

**My father...**

...the house.

**My father used to own a farm before the war. Sold the farm because when Stalin – when – Pilsudski died, the leader, then Jewish people got scared.**

He was the leader of what?

**From Poland.**

Oh, the President?

**Yeah.**

He was the President?

**No, he was not President. He was a leader – was a military leader.**

Oh, okay.

**He ran, he ran the country.**

All right.

**The President was difference.**

Okay. So when he died what happened?

**What's happened to the Jews. The Jews got scared. The Polish people got -- the Polish people, they start fights...**

Oh.

**...of the Jewish people. They break our windows, I remember. [Unclear] other boy – the boy used to comin' in and begged money, borrow money from my father. And my father went to his uncle – his father was got killed during the First World War. And he went to his uncle and tell it, "What's happened?" "He broke my window." And he said, "Mr. Kopec, I fix." And he fix.**

And he did, huh?

**Uh-huh.**

Wow.

**Yeah. Well, they respect my father. My father was a big man. My father, everybody in town going to come to us. My father give them money to buy food.**

Very good.

**Even Jewish people. When he went to the synagogue and people coming in they're crying and *oy vey* [unclear] *brot* - bread. They, they don't have food to eat at all, they're freezin' to death. My father went and buy them a wagon wood, send a man to chop 'em. Send a man to chop 'em, too.**

Send them to what?

**To chop the tree.**

Oh.

**To chop the wood.**

Okay. Okay.

**To help 'em out and to take the home, because the people don't have strength. He giving money to buy a loaf of bread.**

Um-hmm. That's very nice.

**Oh, my father was a angel. Mine father was *so* good to everybody.**

Was your mom good also?

**Oh, yeah.**

Good person?

**I used to, used to comin' to me... My mother and I used to go, we used to have... My father used to bring bags with money -- like this, sack -- a sack change. My mother used to count the money.**

Oh, wow!

**My mother used to count the money. And they give me a couple sacks to go to the, their house and to put grain, to put barley, lima beans, beans, peas, everything from a sack and to carry to the people what they don't have nothing to eat.**

Wow!

**I used to have wood on mine back. I put a sack wood, we've got lots of wood. My father brought some of the wood and they chop it in the [unclear]. We've got lots of wood. We even got lots of coal and bring a pound coal to heat the house that I took to the poor people what they don't have nothing.**

Well, very good.

**This is, this is not a baloney. This is a really history. And I can swear for this what I say. I'm not lying.**

I know.

**I'm not Bronia, I'm not the other people. Yeah, and I can swear, and my brother the same way. Even here, in the United States, when somebody was coming to my brother, they didn't have nothing, he give them money. Mine older brother, Leo, he died at 80 years.**

Oh. What did he die of?

**That's it.**

Just illness? Yeah.

**Well, so much for me passed. It's not a wonder.**

Yeah. It's hard on everyone. Did you all take vacations? Did you...

**Yes.**

...go anywhere as a...

**Yes.**

...as a family or...

**Yes. Yes.**

Where, where did you go?

**We goin' in a, a village where they got lots of trees. They got houses. They got *kurort*. They call in Poland a *kurort*. And we went over there. And some, you know, they cooked in this [unclear]. And yeah, I used to go. Yes.**

Okay.

**Yes.**

What kind of special foods did you like that you had?

**Oh, we always eat meat.**

Uh-huh. What kind of meat?

**Chicken, you know, beef, veal.**

Okay.

**All kinds.**

Just your - what everybody else eats. What you eat now.

**Yeah. Yeah.**

Did you have anything favorite? Any favorite things to eat?

**No, we baked. We baked lots of baking. My mother used to make lots and lots of things. Now I bake -- the only what I give away, I give away to the rabbis. I go to the rabbi and I give it to them and they appreciate it. Purim -- *hamantashen* -- *aber* [Yiddish: means "but"] I make 'em really like my mother used to make.**

I was going to say I bet they're European style.

**European.**

Very good.

And one time he coming to me to synagogue, the rabbi, “Mom, they was delicious. Thank you very much.” And people said, “Why you give it to them?” I said, “*Hamantashen!* You don’t make *hamantashen!*” – to there a newcomer. And they said, “No, do you ever make it?” And I said “I make it.” “How sick are you?” “How? I can do it.” I must do it – the making the *hamantashen* like my mother made.

Uh-huh. Great. Okay. Were your - was your family in politics? Did they believe in being involved in politics?

**No. In Poland was not politics. The *goyim* was in politics. The Gentiles, not Jewish people. Jewish people was not meant... They coming to vote -- who is -- then we go to vote. Twenty-one years is suppose, you know. I never go to vote.**

Oh, you had to be 21 to vote?

**Vote.**

Uh-huh. Okay. You went to school?

**Oh, yeah.**

Okay. Can you tell me about...

**Seven grades. That’s all what they had. Jewish people can’t go to high school.**

Cannot go?

**No.**

Because why?

**Because they Jewish.**

Because they’re Jewish? Huh?

**I’m telling you the truth. And somebody belonging to -- tell you stories, I tell you the truth. We was rich.**

Um-hmm.

**My parents was rich. They could buy the school. They don’t let us because we Jewish. We got a *cheder*. The rabbis come and visit the house. My father paying with the teachers.**

Yeah. Private lessons, or tutoring?

**Yeah.**

Yeah. What were your teachers like? Well, you said the rabbi came into the house.

**Yeah.**

So was that for high school or grade school?

**No! They teached Jewish.**

Oh, okay.

**Yiddish.**

Okay.

**Yiddish.**

Right. Like Hebrew school?

**Um-hmm.**

Okay. Well, what was your grade school like? What, what -- did you have favorite subjects?

**Oh, *mir gefelt alle*.** [Yiddish: "I liked all"]

You liked them all?

**Geography, history -- you know, you know geography, history and *geografia* -- in Polish, I know.**

Geography?

**Geography and history, and [unclear]. [Unclear] that mean what they grow -- how they grow -- how to put it in. I forget the name.**

Agriculture?

**Agriculture. Yeah, they teach us.**

Okay. Well, that's, that's quite a bit.

**Oh, yeah.**

That's important stuff.

**Yeah. Seven grades, you know, finished.**

Yeah.

**Yeah. And I know. I know about the...all of them.**

It sounds like it's advanced classes or something.

**Yeah.**

Okay. When did you graduate from seventh grade? Do you remember?

**I don't remember.**

Okay. But you did? You finished ...

**Yeah, I did.**

You finished school?

**Yeah.**

Okay. What did you do for fun when you were young?

**We'd go in the club. We got the Jewish clubs. Israel clubs. And we danced, we sing, we played.**

Uh huh.

**That's all.**

Is that boys and girls?

**Boys and girls, yeah.**

Combined?

**In wintertime, we ride the sleds. Some Gentiles take a sleigh, a horse, and, I mean a sled, and take 50 cents from each one and you pay them, six or seven boys and girls, and we go for rides.**

Well, good.

**It was lots -- it was --**

It sounds like fun.

**When we was walkin' in the streets, miles and miles and miles. *Aber* when Hitler was invaded, it was not fun.**

Yeah. Things changed, huh?

**Oh, yeah. We moved. We stand behind it in the basement.**

Oh, yeah. Of the house? Did you have a hidden passage or something?

**Huh?**

Did you have hidden doors, secret doors?

**Oh, yeah.**

Oh, you did? Secret passages?

**The basements. The warehouses. I made it under there. What the Polish people, we give – my father give them more grain. He give them all flour, sugar, barley to come and tell us what's going on.**

Oh.

**And they come tell us, "You must go. If they find you, they kill you." And we went. We left. We left and we run away.**

Did you go back? Was that last you saw of the house or the mill?

**Never come back.**

When was that? What year was that?

**It was in 1929...** [sic: means 1939]

Okay.

**...to – for 1940.**

Nineteen thirty- --?

**It was 1929.** [sic: means 1939]

When the Germans...

**They come ...**

...came into Poland?

**Yeah. And they come, and we come in 1929 [sic: 1939], come to the Russian-occupied Poland. In Russian-occupied Poland my father he come to Zambrow. From Zambrow, the Jewish communists – communists that was, was over there – start chases us out. And my father speaks Russian. He went to the Russian, you know, military, and he told them, “I escaped from Hitler and I need to go to Bialystok.” You know about, you know what Bialystok...you hear about it.**

Uh huh.

**“I need to go to Bialystok. I need -- I have a family. I can’t go with little children.” And he gave my father a truck. He took us to Bialystok.**

Wow! That was --

**We stayed over Bialystok ‘til 1940 in May, in the 20 of May. I was working in a, in a fields. It was a Jewish -- a huge [unclear]. We took over, there -- there was a rich man who own a *kurort*, and he start a base. A beautiful place. And he took it over -- land and everything. Then I went to work for him. I told him the story, everything. And he looked at me. I was young.**

Um-hmm.

**And he look at me and said, “Okay. Come to work.” And he gave me a job.**

Wow!

**And I support my parents. My parents had lost everything. Everything.**

Um-hmm.

**No money. No nothing.**

Couldn’t take anything with you?

**No. Then, and I brought payday. I gave my father, I gave my father a payment. And I bought some eggs over there. I bought some of this... And this guy was good to me, very good to me. When he go to the PX, he took me, and he give me the horses and he bought with the *goyim*. [Unclear] I was 14. And he said, “Molly, buy what you want. I take you to PX.” And I said, “You know what? I don’t have money. I don’t at all.” He said, “You don’t have money? Here’s a hundred and seventy-five ruble.” So I went and spend it.**

Wow!

**He was Jewish and he feel sorry for me. And I bought, I'll never forget it, ten kilo herring. And the girls sat like this all the way ...**

Ten what? Ten kilo --

**Herring. Herring!**

Herring? Uh-huh. Big fish?

**The salt herring!**

Yeah.

**The salt.**

Yeah.

**And I bought it barrels. I bought socks. I bought silly -- for them it was silly -- for me it was not silly. When my father went out in the highway and sold it and got potatoes and bought eggs and bought food. For me it was not silly. For them was silly. And he said, and he come over and he said, "Why she buy this kind of food?" "Oh, I told her to buy what she want." He was as nice and I'll never forget this guy. Never all my life.**

Uh-huh. Good.

**And I told him like this, "Now we need to pass by my fath-, my hou-, my house." And I told this everything in my house, and my father and my mother is going take care for us and I pay you back. And he said "I'm not worried about the money. I'm worried to help you." And, I think my mother and my father went to the harbor. We sold some of them. Some of them he give me back the money, mother and my father, to pay back this guy. And I paid back this guy. He was like a father to me, and he got a wife and three children, this guy.**

Kind of adopted you, huh?

**No. He keep... Later then they gonna arrest me he took a truck with food and he call me inside and he said, "Molly, buy what you can. Buy everything, what you need. *Aber* buy lots of bread. I'm telling you." I said, "Well, I'll listen like better than my father. You're good to me." Why not? I bought the bread. Four o'clock this morning they arrest us to Siberia.**

Wow. Wow.

**He knows. Well, he told me to buy bread. That's something to eat. Not to buy foolish things. *Aber* I was listen to him what he tell me. And then like he stay in front of my eyes all my lives-- I'll never forget this guy. He's the only one he helped me when I was in [unclear] - when I was in trouble.**

Uh-huh. You're very lucky. Very lucky he was there. Was your family religious? Very religious?

**My father was very religious. My brothers, too. They go to synagogue, they prayin' every morning.**

Okay. You celebrated all the holidays?

**Oh, yeah.**

Major holidays?

**Oh, yeah.**

As a family?

**Oh, yeah.**

Everybody was together?

**Yeah. We was together when we -- when I got married. I got married and lived in another city.**

Hmm. So everybody went to the city? Everybody went to that city for the wedding?

**Oh, yeah.**

They just traveled, huh?

**Yeah.**

Okay.

**Because there was not like here. Jewish married Jewish.**

Oh.

**We not marry Gentiles. No, Gentiles not marry Jewish people. No.**

Yeah. A little different, huh?

**Yeah. Here is different. Here is mixed up.**

Were the Jews accepted by the community, or was there antisemitism?

**It's anti...**

Before the war broke out, you think?

**No. After.**

Not until the war broke out?

**When the war – when Hitler start [unclear] around Poland then the antisemitism.**

I see. Were you involved in that? Did you have anything happen?

**No.**

Your friends or neighbors, you know, that would...

**Let me tell you something. When I went – when my girlfriends come to my house, I need to take them home. You know why?**

Why?

**Because they hit her and they don't hit me. Then if she went with me, they don't touch her.**

Oh. Huh. You were her protection, huh?

**Yeah.**

Wow! That's not good.

**She come to me, I say, "Here, I'll take you home because you're not going home by yourself. I can go home by myself. But you're not because [unclear]." My father give – when they called a meeting in the City Hall they call my father and they got a meeting with my father going around meeting with the people. And he said my father give 3,000 *zloty* for the Red Cross. Supposed to get a medal. It broke war time, the medal wasn't given. My father wasn't given medal. 3,000 *zloty* like here was before the war 3,000 dollar. My father goes -- my father went out in the street and started a speech for the people. And in the market, there were all the Jewish walking around the market. And he said, "Kopec have too much money. He don't know what to do with the money." He said, "I give away half from my property, half for all of it. Half of my money. Half of everything to there not be a war. You people don't know. *Es brent!* [Yiddish; "It's burning."] Burn a fire – a big fire -- from the Jewish people. Please! Listen to me!" They start laughing. They makin' fun of my father.**

"Please listen to me" -- what?

**My father said, “Please listen to me.” It was going on a horrible time and there people start laughin’ from my father. In eight days – two days! -- everybody left. The whole city leaved.**

The Jews? Jews of the city were gone? The Germans took them? Yeah.

**They went and took them. If they find them, they kill them. I was in a synagogue. I was with mine parents, with my brother and sister. My brother -- my father covered us up in the prayer shawl -- so help me God, I swear by God, I did not tell you a lie – to say the last prayer – we goin’ *al kiddush hashem* [Hebrew: means “for the sanctification of the Name”; i.e., they were preparing to die martyr’s deaths for the sanctification of God’s name]. I went out. I was stay by the door, by the east door, when they throw the bomb. Like I said, by the east door he throw the bomb and I run away. I ran away. See my leg?**

Oh, yes. Uh-huh.

**This is burn. And I heal with clay.**

Clay? You put clay on it? Like mud? Like ... uh-huh.

**Take out the temperature. We never let dry out – fresh, put fresh and put fresh. And never not [unclear]. We lay down in a pasture. The people what run out of the synagogue didn’t survive.**

Make a note here that Molly showed me her left leg, lower leg, that was - had scars, discoloration from burns that were suffered in a synagogue bombing when she was younger. And she applied clay, wet mud or clay, to it to take the heat out to make the burn bearable. Okay. Where did you get married?

**I got married in Siberia.**

You were married in Siberia? Okay. How did you meet your husband?

**My husband come where I was working.**

Okay. Was he a prisoner also?

**Yeah.**

Okay.

**There, and he comes tell me, “Got plenty girls over there. Beautiful girls, blonde, blue eyes, light.” And I tell him, “Go. Get other girls. Are you really going to marry me? My mother won’t let me marry a shoemaker.” And he said, “Why you chase me out? Why I come to you and you tell me to go to them?” I said, “They’re pretty. They’re nicer looking. I have**

**my mother to support. And I'm not going to throw away because I marry you." He said, "I help you."**

You still had the responsibility to your pare-, you mom?

**Yeah.**

Your mother?

**And he say, "I'm going to help." I still -- my mother staying with me and I need to help my mother. One time I eat grass. One time.**

One time you what?

**I eat grass. We don't have nothing to cook. I ate my...**

Oh, ate grass?

**Grass.**

Okay.

**Then, I got stomachache and I said, "Mama, I'm going to do everything in my life not to leave a person alone. I'm going to give you some bread." And I went, I got one guy what years ago a girlfriend's used to carry the mail. And he was, he was a wholesaler. Buys wholesales in rations in Siberia. I went to him and I said, "Alexander, listen. If you not going help me now, I'm goin' die and my mother's goin' die and you goin' have responsibility for this." And he looked at me and started crying and said, "Molly..."**

He looked at you and started crying?

**He looked at me. He likes me. He's very [unclear], you know for I was a hard worker. I got, I got, in all the papers. All the police know me, the Russian police.**

Um-hmm.

**Got it in all the police papers. I got a notice I'm the hardest worker in the, in the place. And they give me a sack potatoes. They got basements -- just like from this street to the others -- basements with potatoes and they put wet potatoes. And that potatoes, I mean it, they start rottin'.**

Yeah.

**Stink the town. He said, "I got basement with potatoes. You need to separate it, the good one from the bad one, that the good one don't get rotten from the bad one." And I said,**

**“Okay. I’m going do.” He gave me 600 gram bread. I said, “Can’t I take my mother with me?” He said, “Yes.” Oh, that was a blessing for me.**

Um-hmm

**I said, “Mother, we got a job. Let’s go.” And over there was a oven. A oven where the bread fired and you baked potatoes all, and you eat it.**

Oh good! Lifesaver. Lifesaver.

**Oh, but I done it different. Where I stayed, in this house, with a old man, a lady, with a girl on top of... They took me in to sleep over there. And when they took me in, I said to the old man, “We got horses to take care from the *kolkhoz* [Soviet collective farm].” We took care for the *kolkhoz* horses. I said, “Could you bring a horse and a buggy to get the rotten potatoes for your pig?” “Oh, yes! Molly, that’s good!” I told him like this, I put two buckets of potatoes, good ones, between.**

You put two buckets of potatoes what?

**Good ones.**

Oh, good ones.

**Good ones. And I said, “*Aber* you don’t separate them. When I come home, I could separate them.” I separated it. At the end of the month I got 60 buckets of potatoes.**

Oh, good potatoes.

**And you know what? There was a miracle. My brother once said to me like this, “God give a door to every support.” Saved a door to support everybody.**

Um-hmm. That’s amazing.

**You know, there was a miracle!**

Yeah.

**And I started working. I still was working for this company. For this better house. I took horses from the *kolkhoz* and I deliver to the flour mill, grain. *Aber* when we get a chance to steal, we steal.**

When you change what?

**To steal.**

To steal?

**Steal grain.**

Oh, oh. Huh.

**We was not so stupid. We was -- I was the only between the big shots. With the big shots steal. If they tell me something, I'm goin' tell on you? What you going do with me?**

Yeah.

**When you tell on me, I tell on you. You better keep your mouth shut.**

Yeah, you'll tell.

**That's all.**

Get in trouble.

**See how we survive?**

Oh, yeah.

**And I survive lots of Polish people. I survived Jewish girls. They steal. I speak the language. The Komi language. I speak six languages.**

Do you?

**Nobody knows.**

What languages do you speak?

**I speak Polish, Jewish, Russian, German, English and Komish [Komi].**

Komish?

**Komish. Komish. They speak in Siberia Komish.**

Oh.

**No! No! You don't know.**

It's not Russian?

**No! They don't know how speak the language. I speak always Russian to them and I listen when the girls sat in the house in [unclear] and I watch them. And I speak the language. When I – when they come in the big NKVD...**

Come in a big what?

**The NKVD. You know what NKVD is? Like the chief police.**

Oh.

**See he comes and said to each other we need to arrested everybody, you know. My manager is good to me. And I said, "Alexan, don't face him. When he come downstairs, go upstairs. When he go upstairs, go downstairs. Don't face him, or he goin' arrest you." And he said, "How you know? Molly, how you know? *Marushka*, how you know?" "Listen, because I speaking to them their language." He said, "I don't know you speak the language." He said, "Keep quiet." "I'm just telling you because you my friend. Saved my mother's life and you saved my life." You see when we passed they said Siberia was good. Was good like our -- I can hear him. I can -- they tell me, "You goin' die here. You goin' die here." And I told him, the guy, "You older from me. You're goin' die first." I got so mad. I speak languages. I was not afraid for them. And I said, "You look here. You look here." He said, "Yes." "Alexan, keep your mouth shut." And he doesn't even know whose [unclear].**

Yeah. So you met your husband there?

**Yeah.**

In Siberia?

**Yeah. I met my husband in Siberia.**

You had a wedding there?

**Yes.**

In Siberia?

**Yes.**

Okay.

**I got the license there. A Jewish license.**

Oh, okay.

**I got the Jewish license.**

From a rabbi?

Yes. Of course, it was a rabbi. He was teaching children Hebrew. And he give us *chuppah kiddushin*. And he give us *chuppah kiddushin*. And I lost that. And when I come to Germany, the same guy was coming in my camp what he give us *chuppah kiddushin*. Now we need license to go to the United States. We don't have license. As I go to this camp, these guys in this camp, "You can go tell 'em to the rabbi and he give you license." "I show you the license. I got him here. I got the license." And I got a license. And I brought it to the United States, the license.

Oh.

My husband show it up as we drive by here in Beth Shalom. He showed them the license. "So don't you think we doing like, like dogs. Look here, see. We got the license signed by a rabbi."

So he wouldn't think you're living not together but not married, right?

No, we married. We married. We put a *chuppah*, and that's all. I made -- my husband brought me ten eggs and I got a little bit flour and I made cookies. And...

Uh. How many guests...?

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Let me tell this.

Okay.

Just a minute. And a guy was, he was a [unclear]. He – he works with horses. A [unclear] You know a [unclear]? He makes horses and buggies. Buggies, you know?

Okay.

Yeah. He works in a *kolkhoz* – in a place. So he got whiskey – [unclear]. He comin' in and he said, "You get invited. Come in, get married." I said, "Oh, why don't you tell me I would brought some more food?" And I said, "Are you a rabbi?" He said, "Yes."

What? A bottle of whiskey?

Whiskey. But they making – they sell the whiskey. It's just from potatoes.

Right.

He brought me a bottle of whiskey and I make ten eggs – cookies -- that's all. That was the wedding.

Oh. Just like three, four people?

There was – there was about ten people.

About ten people? Good. Well, that's all you needed. [laughing] Okay.

**I just have, when you will see, I bringing in the other drawer I have a pocketbook and the pocketbook is laying on the *ketubah* – the Jewish shape, the writing, from the rabbi. You will see. I'm not lying to you.**

Oh, I know. I know. Okay. So you were married in Siberia. You stayed in Siberia.

**Yeah, I laid on my -- they took my husband to their reactors. My brother, my brother in-law, and brother.**

To reactors?

**Work for the reactors.**

For what?

**Reactors! Like here --**

Nuclear reactors?

**Yes!**

They had that then?

**Yes! In Siberian! And they pulled – you know what they do? They pulled the stuff from the sea.**

What? Uranium? They took it out of the sea? Huh!

**And they told 'em they making, uh, plywood – *zavod*. You know what plywood mean? This is plywood [sound of hand knocking on wood surface].**

Yeah.

**This is ply-... They're making plywood – *zavod*. And then everybody went to work. Dead people -- believe me they dyin' from hungry. When they lay down and sleep they never stay up over there.**

Not get up.

**They sat by, you know, by the reactors. And there , you know, my husband said to me -- to the general, "I don't see plywood. I see you pull something from the sea. What's this?" Me don't understand. But me don't see this in Europe. They said, "That's it. Don't ask question." Said, "Why don't you feed the people?" It was a Jewish man. He said, "I'm hungry myself. I don't have myself to eat." That's... that was the answer.**

Did you have any children that were born in Europe?

**Yes. Both of them. Both of them.**

They were born in Siberia?

**No. My daughter is born in *Kavkaz*. They took us out from Siberia. I told you they keep us all in the – to the – radium, here. And Truman make the pact. They took us out from Siberia. Stalin keep the promise, took us out from Siberian and put us to *Kavkaz*. *Kavkaz* is like Florida. They grow oranges, grapes...**

Where is *Kavkaz*?

***Kavkaz* is Kuban.**

Cuba?

**Kuban. No, no – in Russia. The Russian, these... Five hundred miles was Stalin went of Kurort. What is name? I forgot.**

We are going to pause here and switch sides of the tape.

**Okay.**

Side two of Molly Nagel's interview.

**They took us to *Kavkaz*. My – they let free my husband, my brother, and my brother-in-law. At that time no people. There was no Jewish people and they all of them was there, living where I was. In *Kavkaz*. They comin' into *Kavkaz*.**

Now this was when you were released?

**Released. Yeah.**

Okay.

**They released us. We was comin' to *Kavkaz*. I was working in a – in a field – in fields.**

Fields -- uh-huh.

**No shoes, no glove. I walked three miles. Later my husband was come.**

Um hmm.

**Released my husband, my brother, me, the other people, the other Jewish people. Forgot the names.**

Did you have to wear a *Mogen David* -- Star of David?

**Not in Russia.**

You never had that in Russia?

**No. No. Oh, no, no -- not in Russia. They call us “filthy Jew.” They throw us rocks.**

Rocks?

**They call us “Abrash!” – “Abram! Abram! Abram!”**

Oh Abraham? Okay. Okay. Huh.

**Yeah. My husband come. There was a flood. I told him to take a bath from the mud and [unclear-], clean up. I give him mine father’s shirts, pants, underwear -- dressed him up. Then he was swollen from hunger. I got material – I bought some material. I went to the black market and I sold it and I bought a bottle, what – honey. And I got left money, I give my neighbors to get a cow to give milk. And I told my mother to buy milk. We mix up with honey to make the swelling goin’ away from him.**

You mean for your father?

**For my moth-, for my husband!**

Oh, your husband. Okay.

**My father died in 1940.**

Okay. Okay. All right.

**Then I give him the milk. The swelling’s going away. I got a neighbor, he was NKVD. She [the wife of the official] was like a gypsy. And I go to her and I say, “Now listen, I bring you water, I help you do something.” And I said, “Why don’t you tell Volodka” – his [the official] name was Volodka, I never forget – “give my husband a job.” And they give him a nice [unclear]. It was in a shoe shop. They called [unclear], special, I mean, this is for the government.**

Where was this now?

***Kavkaz.***

In *Kavkaz*. Okay.

**Yeah. My husband went to work. They give him in a restaurant – they give a restaurant – they don’t buy already. They got food, plenty – they seem – they got food. [Unclear phrase]**

**They tell my husband take a – they got the – the man told [unclear]. They brought a bucket cheese, you know, soft cheese. They got milk, they got everything. And got to feed him. And I was working. I, myself [unclear phrase]. The girls gave me a piece of bread to eat.**

Wow!

**I don't dare get that. I don't want it. They said, "Molly, you must have it."**

You have to take it. Yeah. You have to take it or you wouldn't have survived.

**I had to take it. The girls on the farm, they brought bread. They brought extra bread for me to give it to me. One was a general's wife. She brought it. She got plenty because she get in PX lots of bread. She got in PX, and she said...**

You said PX?

**PX. PX.**

P ox.

**They was like here...**

Is it like a store?

**Like a store or a military store.**

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**They called PX.**

Okay. This – here it's PX.

**PX.**

Uh-huh. Okay. Same thing. Okay.

**And, you know, you survive.**

Uh-huh.

**And, later, we stop working and so I got pregnant with my daughter. And my daughter was born in *Kavkaz*.**

Okay.

**1945, when the war stopped.**

I see. Okay. When were you released from Siberia? What year was that? Forty...?

'44.

'44? Okay. Okay. How did you feel when you were free? You know, when the war was over?

**We come to Poland, was horrible! They throw rocks on us!**

They didn't want you back?

No.

They didn't want the Jews back?

**They want kill... No! "You dirty Jew. Why you come back?" And throw rocks on us. We was afraid to go in the street. It was in -- there was not -- there was invaded by Poland. Over there was -- um, what is this? Not Czechoslovakia -- Austria? -- there was a different part. I forgot the name.**

I don't know. So what did you all do? You left Poland then?

**Yeah -- no -- wait a minute. My husband started goin' to *polak* [i.e., to Poland, or to Polish-held territory]. He speak Russian. And the soldiers come and you making boots. My husband used to speaking to them in Russian -- he's speaking to them. Later --**

To work for him to make boots? To work for them -- the soldiers -- to --

**Yeah. Later, it was bad, was becomin' bad. The Polish people...**

But you didn't go -- you didn't go with your husband?

**They made a revolution.**

Uh-huh. You didn't go with your husband, though? You didn't go with your husband to make the boots?

**No! I can't make boots!**

Well, I mean, but you couldn't go with him?

**No. I got a baby.**

All right.

**I got a baby. I got to feed my, my -- got take care for my mother and take care for the baby. And...**

So what did you do?

**I couldn't do nothing. I just take care for my baby and [unclear] and he bring me some to buy groceries.**

Okay. How long did you do that?

**You know, later, the Polish people make a revolution, in the city, to vote there. The vote is throw the Jews [unclear] is very bad. And we went to the Jewish synagogues, to the rabbis, and registered to go to Germany.**

Okay.

**And we left to Germany and it was horrible.**

It was what?

**It was horrible.**

Horrible?

**There was one guy in the train make a -- and it start yelling at us. We saw his badge. A Polish man. Then a Jewish, a Jewish soldier, he was from the Haganah.**

Haganah?

**He was took care for us. He come in, "You son of a bitch." And he called, "They goin' steal your watch and they wear a watch! I know you!" And the guy got scared. He starts to keep quiet. And the town...**

Did he get his watch back?

**...to Klotzk.** [May be referring to the Polish town of Klodzhko, which is 75 km south of Wroczlaw, not far from the Czech border.]

**No! He don't have a watch! We get -- we come to Klotzk. Klotzk was the border from Czechoslovakia. Honest to God – I remember.**

Okay.

**We was by Klotzk. By Klotzk one lady, one lady, recognized us. She was from our city. Her husband was a -- used to carry grain to the, to the station, to the train station. And she starts screaming, "My gosh! Who I see now? Mrs. Kopec! Mrs. Kopec! Mrs." And my mother, when later she come to me she said, "You have a baby. What did they teach you?"**

**They cook food. I tell them to give you some food to cook because I know you. I know you."**

Wow!

**Yeah. Who recognized us.**

Yeah. That's pretty neat.

**Later -- I'll tell you another story. We went in a train. They took us to a train, to Czechoslovakia. Honest to God. The train got a stove, a little stove, and the wood and they burn and the [unclear]. Know what? They said the conductor was coming in and he said, "You must raise the stove higher, to not to catch the wood from the train." Everybody run. There was one guy what he used to work for my, he used for my father. Then he ran for, for, for something. And I said, "You people go away! I'm going raise the burn – the stove." And he said, "Okay, who is going to raise it if you have a baby here?" [And Mrs. Nagel said] "I'm goin' raise the stove. Give me a stick and bring me two pieces wood. After the two pieces of wood, bring me a brick. Bring me three bricks." I went, pushed in the hole the stick and I stepped in, and I put the legs faced up. Then I put two pieces of wood and I put two pieces of wood in there like a foot rest and I put in the front. Then I put again and I done it again stepped in. "Give me the brick!" I put the brick, I released the wood, I put the brick. The brick raised up. They raised up. They raised up – and around four times.**

Now it's up? Stove was up?

**And one bookkeeper, what used to know my father in Warsaw, he used to work in stock market, he say, "I couldn't believe it." He says, "I couldn't believe it." And they come and give me bricks and steel and junk. And he said, "Throw away, it's already raised. And guess who raised? This lady."**

Who raised?

**Raised up the stove.**

Oh, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

**The stove. "So how she do it?" [The man answered,] "She knows."**

Uh-huh. That's a good story. Pretty smart. Yeah.

**And this is not a lie. When I come in the camp, they give stuff for children. I got a child but the little babies...**

Is this like DP camp now or...

**What?**

The camp you're saying ...

**Where I come in the camp?**

Yeah.

**Yeah. DP camp.**

DP camp?

**DP Ansbach.**

Ansbach? Okay.

**The name is Ansbach.**

Okay.

**Came Ansbach.**

And where is that?

**Germany.**

In Germany. Okay.

**Germany.**

All right.

**We come in Ansbach...**

Your husband was with you now?

**He was.**

And your child?

**And my child and my mother.**

And your mother?

**Yeah.**

Okay.

**Four of them.**

Okay.

**Then we wait. A rabbi -- one rabbi from United States he give us a room. He keep -- he make pictures from my daughter and give her chocolate to eat. *Alter man* [Yiddish: "old man"] -- what was this rabbi was named? Here in the United States. Rabbi Bernstein.**

Oh, uh-huh. How long were you in DP camp?

**I was four years. My son is born in DP camp.**

Oh! That's a long time.

**Yeah. Four years. My son is born in 1947.**

Okay. And how did you come to leave the DP camp? What happened?

**We left when they cancelled in Eastern Europe. When the cancellation come, of the DP camp. They sent people to Israel.**

Oh.

**I got papers from my uncle -- from my husband's uncle. "Don't go no places. Just come to the United States." He sent affidavit for us. *Aber* [usually means "but"; however, in this case it is being used as "if"] I come in '46, then I could come to the United States in '46. The only people come in '45 was what United States should have listing from the camps. I could come in because I was in Siberia. Then the uncle wrote me letters -- I still have letters, all the letters -- "Stay so long. As long as you can. Just to come to the United States."**

I see.

**"Best country in the world is United States."**

So you passed up going to Israel and waited for the quota, waited for the quota...

**For the quota.**

For United States.

**Then we went to [unclear], 'cause was 200 people in my husband's family and they all got killed, and he's alone alive. He survived by himself.**

He's the only one out of 200? Wow! Wow. How many people did -- how many were in your family? About.

**My family – my family was six children. Me and my father and my mother and sister was ... One brother...**

Cousins?

**Cousins, uncles.**

Aunts?

**Lots of ‘em.**

Sure.

**They died, they got killed.**

Sure.

**I just find in Israel, when I went to Israel, I find one cousin -- two cousins. One from Cuba. He was a nice one, very nice, very intelligent man. And it was -- he was dealing dry goods.**

Dry goods?

**Dry goods. He was not poor. He come see us, see me. He come see me and invite us – he invite us for home for dinner. And the rest, I don’t know who got – who died. Who went to other countries they survived. Who went stay in Poland, they got killed.**

Yeah. What, what, what are your children’s names?

**My Beverly – Braina [Beverly’s Jewish name]. Beverly and Jack.**

Okay. Did they... Were they...?

**Jack is after my father.**

Okay. That’s what I was going to ask if they were named after a family member.

**And Beverly is name after my mother and my mother-in-law.**

Okay. Braina?

**Breindl.**

Breindl? Okay. Okay. So how did you... You got accepted to come to the United States. How did you come over? On boats?

**I come, yeah, in a boat...**

What kind of...?

**...to New Orleans.**

What kind of boat was it?

**George Blander.** [sic – the family came on the USS General Langsford]

George Blando?

**Belindo? Belondo? I don't know.**

Was it a –

**A general.**

-- a freight?

**A general. No.**

A freight liner?

**I don't know what it was.**

Cargo ship? Passenger ship?

**I don't know.**

Okay.

**I don't remember, you know. It's a ship! You lay down --**

Just a big -- you didn't care what kind. It was just a big ship ...

**A big ship.**

-- that took you away. Okay.

**Yeah.**

So you came to New Orleans first?

**Yeah.**

Okay.

**In 1949... '49, December. Yeah, the end of December because I come 1950. 19-- in December. It was Friday. Saturday was New Year.**

Oh, uh-huh.

**You know Friday night was New Year Eve.**

Yeah.

**New Year. And Saturday was the first day in the United States when I come. This Saturday was 50 years when I come to the United States.**

That's amazing, isn't it?

**Yeah. Now [unclear] says I'm sick, I don't go four weeks to the synagogue. I must go to the synagogue. I must go. I wake up early this morning. I dressed up -- I was like drunk. I called the company, called the cab company, for the cab company pick me up to the synagogue.**

When was this now?

**This Saturday.**

This last weekend?

**Yeah.**

Okay. Okay.

**I call up the company and I said, "I'm Molly Nagel and I would like to get picked up at the synagogue." Said, "Okay. We come 9:15." They picked me up. I see there the *gabbai* go around and call everybody *aliyah* [a Torah honor], and I say, "Come here."**

[chuckling]

**"Come on." He look at me, for first time I call him and talked to him. And he said, "What's the matter?" I said, "Today is the first day, Saturday, 50 years ago, I come to this country." And he start smile and he said, "That's neat." And I said...**

Very special.

**Yeah. And he said, "I give you *aliyah*." I said, "Okay. Can you tell me where?" Because he's telling me what kind. He said, "Open up the ark." And I said, "Okay." "Can't you do it?" "Oh, yeah! I can do it everything. You don't know me because you never talk to me and I don't talk to you."**

Yeah.

**I just come in and sat down and do my business prayin' and I go home. And he said, "Okay."**

That day was special?

**Yeah. Then [Mrs. Nagel said to the *gabbai*] "But you tell me when." Then he come over, and it's *aliyah* and he tell me "Let's go." So I go. The rabbi tried to get me up. Everybody tried to get me up. I said, "Wait a minute, let me get myself." I took the rail and I went up and was staying and open up – open up. And he said, "Don't go." You see, I had a lump in this leg cause I fall down and this is broke – this leg – this arm is broke. I can't move this arm. I said "[Unclear] – I stay." And later they sing *Hatikvah* – I sing with them.**

They did what?

***Hatikvah.***

Oh.

**I sing with them and they were surprised. They never hear me singin' – they never close to me. The rabbi know me – know me very well. I send him *yahrzeit* gifts [donations made on the anniversary of the death of a loved one]. Send him everything. I send him now from my mother-in-law, my father-in-law. I don't even know him. I never known him. But I send him money for his *yahrzeit*. And for my father and mother, I sent gifts. And I say the prayer. I go to the synagogue, the girl take me, and I say *Kaddish*.**

Hmm. Um-hmm.

**It's very important.**

Molly, how did you wind up in Kansas City?

**I come with the uncle, [unclear] Joe Mallin.**

Your husband's...

**My husband's uncle.**

Okay.

**The mother's brother brought us over to the United States. He sent me the affidavits and he paid for us.**

Okay. Did you know English then?

**No.**

No English?

**No.**

You speak good English.

**No.**

How did you learn to speak English?

**I learned.**

Did you go to night school?

**No.**

Okay.

**I don't got a chance because I got two children to raise.**

Okay. Yeah.

**Then, I don't go to high school and my husband went nights.**

Okay. He went to night school?

**Night school.**

Westport? Did he go to Westport?

**Yeah. Yeah.**

On 39th downtown?

**Yeah. He go to 39th. I used to live on Holmes, 33rd and Holmes. He used to walk over there. He used to go. I learned from people.**

Okay.

**I listen.**

You pick up.

**And I picked up. Like I went to work...**

Is that how you learned your other languages? You just listened, picked it up? That's very good.

**I tell my children, "Learn Jewish. I talk to you Jewish. Learn! Don't forget it. Most common necessary in your life. You never know, darlin'." They said, "Mother, you learn English. You learn English." "I'm going to learn English, but you'll forget Jewish."**

[chuckling] Did you adjust to life in the United States pretty easy, or was it hard?

**Oh, for me is no different. I, I, I...**

You did okay?

**I do my -- you know.**

Okay. What was hard for you? What was a tough thing to overcome?

**In beginning is tough. I went with my children shopping. My husband went to work right away. We don't ask for charity. I don't got a penny charity – from nobody. Even from uncle. We made it our own.**

What?

**We make it our own. My husband went to work.**

Oh, you made it on your own? Yeah.

**Listen, Bronia, meet me one time on the street. She said, "Oh, honey, how are you?" I said, "Fine. How are you? Who you?" Later she said like this "Yeah. What you doing?" "Oh, my husband works." "How much money he make?" "He make 40 dollars a week. And he sent me two kids." "You got enough?" I said, "Yes. I've got enough." "My husband made 80 dollars and I don't have enough." And I said, "It's too bad."**

[chuckling]

**You know it's such like this. You cut the bread. How much you get slices.**

Yeah. You just make it work. Yeah. You just do the best with what you have. Right? Yeah.

**And I save it. From the 40 dollars I save money and I pay uncle 40 dollars a month rent.**

Wow!

**You know how many?**

That's a whole paycheck. Yeah.

**Oh, no. I saved some.**

Plus you saved and paid the rent.

**I saved. In 18 months I got 1,800 dollars. I bought a house.**

Wow!

**I don't have -- I need 2,000. Then my brother come here and I said, "Listen. I'm short 200 dollars to get into real estate." [Unclear sentence.] He said, "Okay, I go to uncle and I ask uncle, if we can borrow 200 dollars. He come to uncle, said, "Joe, the kids need help." He [the uncle] said, "What kind help they need? They working." "Yeah, but they bought a house." "They bought a house!" He was so disappointed. He [the brother] said, "They had 1,800 dollars. They needed 200 dollars. They need 2,000." And he [the brother continues] said, "Why don't you borrow it [i.e., borrow it on their behalf or underwrite the loan] – and she don't want it – to give it to her. She want borrow from you."**

A loan?

**A loan. Yeah, a loan company. They had a loan company. He said, "Okay. I give you 200 dollars." He went to give me 200 dollars and I brought 200 dollars to make a real estate contract. I went to North American, downtown, and we make the loan. And he said – Joe said to me, "First time in my lifetime. I got so quick a loan like I got for you."**

Wow!

**And I said, "Thank you."**

That was very much appreciated, wasn't it? Yeah.

**And I got a loan and I moved in. Later, the lady brought the water tank. I don't have hot water to take the kids a bath and I see that's another problem. I walked around Prospect and got a guy got a business with water tanks. I went to him and I can't speak English. And what I said – I talked to him – "Water tank, water tank, broke, broke, water tank." He said, "What is this lady talking to me? Something is wrong. Let's go to the house. You tell me. Come to the house."**

To show them...

**To show.**

To show them what was wrong.

**Show 'em what it did happen. Then I show him. He says, "You tell me -- you have two dollars?" I said, "Yes. I have two dollars." "Give me two dollars." I give him two dollars. When he went backed a loan in a loan company and he put another thing.**

Oh.

**They make me a loan to pay all the time. Then I got a meeting with the kids – with the both kids – they get in all-day school. And I said, “Kids, you need more clothes, you need more shoes, you need more books, you want a – you need a typewriter. Daddy is not making money. I need to go to work and I’m going make money for you.”**

Yeah. So you can have the things that you want or need.

**Whatever you want. “You want take care? Do you want runnin’ around? Do you want play around?” They said, “Okay, mother. You go to work.” I went a friend and the friend find me a job. For the friend’s wife was working a floor in a toy factory.**

Now, what was the name of the company? Which toy factory?

**J. B. Toy Company.**

J. B.?

**Yes. And there was named Greenspan -- Roman Greenspan.**

Is that downtown or something? Or was it downtown?

**No, downtown. Yeah, that was downtown.**

Okay.

**And they got me for the job. And my husband was the job too, and he got even my husband the job, too. There was Sachar – maybe you know Sachar? Sachar – I don’t know his last name.**

I – I don’t know.

**No. He died. His wife is in a home. He said to me like this, “Ha, ha. I by myself make 90 dollars. They both are making 85.” And I said to my husband, “Be quiet. Don’t answer. Silence is gold. Talking is silver.”**

Talk is what?

**Talk.**

Silence is golden?

**Is golden.**

Talk is --

**Is silver.**

Silver. Okay.

**Gold is better than silver.**

Yeah. Okay.

**He kept quiet, he didn't say nothin'. Before too long, not any work – with the 95 dollars.**

And he was gone too?

**He's gone.**

He was gone and you were there. Uh-huh.

**Yeah. Later my husband says...**

You know why -- because he was making too much.

**No. Of course, he got a big mouth. If you make money, you don't keep... you keep quiet.**

Yeah. You don't brag. You don't brag about it, huh?

**No. And we make money in shoe shop. Nobody knows. Nobody doesn't know.**

Yeah. That's good.

**I cooked, I baked, I've done everything in the world. When we made money, we put in the bank and I say Sam and I survived. I'm going to survive here. And that's it. And we don't need charity.**

Yeah.

**I don't need charity.**

How, how did you become a citizen? Or when, when did you become a citizen?

**When I come -- when I, I have become second time [unclear] -- I think in '56.**

'56?

**Yeah. Because I come in 1950. It's take a year to get through the papers.**

Okay.

'56 --

You have to be here five years...

**Five years.**

...to be a citizen.-

**Yeah. To be a citizen.**

Okay. Was that important to you?

**Oh, yeah!**

Was that very important to you?

**There's nothing wrong with this! Nobody can kick me out! [Laughs]**

You belong here now? Yeah.

**50 years!**

Yeah. Well, that's neat.

**You longer than me.**

Huh?

**You longer in the United States.**

Me?

**Yeah.**

Well, I'm just... I was born here.

**Oh, you was born here?**

Yeah, but I'm 50. I am 50. Yeah. Okay. What... So what other jobs have you had? You worked in the toy factory, you did clothing, sewing...

**No, no, no. I just work in toy factory about eight years and I quit and I worked with my husband – a saleslady in the shoe shop.**

The shoes? Okay.

**Yeah. I build this building. I build up this building and we moved in and I worked in [unclear].**

Okay. So...

**You know, when you...**

I bet you did a good job.

**...when you own your own property, you never want to live for somebody. Never.**

Never what?

**You never want to live for – by somebody, if you got your own property...**

Oh.

**...all your life.**

Sure.

**See all of your life I just lived in my own house with my parents.**

Yeah.

**Yeah. And here in the United States, just seven years what I don't live -- in 1956 I moved in my own house. And this is 195-...**

Was it this house?

**No.**

Okay.

**It was in that Wabash. No --**

Wabash?

**Yeah. By Wabash. It was Pershing School. The kids went right across.**

Yeah. Okay.

**I live here 50, um, 40 years -- exactly. When school started my son went to Bingham School.**

Yeah. I did too.

**What year you went to Bingham School?**

I don't remember years. 1960?

**Oh, '60.**

Something like '60 - '62.

**My son went before. Two years when [unclear]. In 1960 he was in college.**

Yeah. I think he was older. It sounds like he was older than me.

**He's 53-years-old.**

Okay. So he's three years older. Yeah. Do you have any hobbies? Anything that interests you now?

**No.**

That you do for fun and take up time?

**I don't have time.**

Okay. Let's see. We discussed your children and their names and their occupations.

**My daughter quit school.**

Yeah. Okay.

**To teach...**

Special...

**...stage.**

...special education or something?

**Special, yeah. She teached gifted children.**

Gifted. Okay. That's neat. And she's in Iowa?

**Iowa.**

Right. Okay. And your son is, is living here.

**His company is here –Black & Veatch.**

Black & Veatch?

**No, no. By Black & Veatch.**

Huh?

**Yeah, Black & Veatch.**

Okay.

**He's a mechanical and chemical engineer – both of them. He worked hard, and he finished.**

Wow! That's amazing. That's a lot to learn.

**Oh, he's – he got honors from Mayor Bartle.**

Yeah. That's neat.

**And got the City Council for books.**

Wow! Okay. What did you think about having children? What kind of feelings did you have relating to the war and all of that? Or did you even have, you know, strange feelings about having kids, having children, a new family and all that? You know.

**No! I wanted to have children -- two children.**

That was fine?

**One born in Russia, one born in Germany. That's is. And I need to work for them to educate them, to give 'em [unclear phrase] alive [unclear].**

Right. Just keep it going. Just keep on going.

**Yeah. Keep on going.**

Okay. Okay. And, let's see, your family, the kids are named after a couple of your family members. Your father...

**Yeah, and my mother-in-law.**

...and your mother-in-law. Okay. Did you discuss your wartime with the children?

**No. They don't...**

Do they know now?

**Oh, they know.**

What was going on?

**Yeah. They're very educated.**

They're familiar?

**They learn.**

I mean but with you. Your story -- did they know what happened to you and your husband?

**They know.**

Okay. All right. Okay.

**What is written in there?**

Huh?

**What you got written down? Writing down – the list.**

Here?

**Yeah.**

I didn't write that. This is "What were your children's occupations?"

**Oh.**

Is what that says. I didn't write that. Okay. Well, this is all we have right here. Do your Holocaust memories interfere or do they have anything to do with your everyday life now? You know, does it have any affect on you now? Do you think... Do you have nightmares or bad dreams about anything?

**Well, let me tell you something. I'm old. I'm just sick. You know, you know, like all the time all the sickness.**

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

**That's all.**

But that's normal. Yeah.

**Yeah. I take medicine and more medicine I take the worsen it is.**

Oh.

**Tell your mother not to take too many medicine. I feel it now. He cut off medicine -- the doctor took me off the medicine. I told him the medicine give me a -- got a -- hole. A room.**

Ulcer? No.

**That's what the doctor -- the pills.**

Yeah. You have to watch it. Yes. Too strong.

**Then he cut me off from pills. I feel much better.**

Okay. Let's see. Are you a religious person now?

**Oh, I was religious always.**

You've always been? You haven't changed?

**Yeah. No.**

Okay. Very good.

**I use kosher meat. I use kosher, everything kosher.**

Okay.

**I never change. When I come to this country, I got a chance to use kosher meat. I don't care what I pay. I don't care. When I come in the house where they are not kosher, I don't eat.**

Yeah.

**One time I was invited in a place and I was disappointed that they not fixed -- they don't got kosher. Then, the other night, my son took me [unclear] -- that's my daughter-in-law's family, and my son know I don't eat unkosher. When I eat he was disappointed, but he don't say nothing, and I don't say nothing.**

Yeah.

**I bake home pastry for the holidays. I do everything. I cook my own meals. When even -- when I go to my son, he cook difference for me. He cook fish. He make fish. He bakes fish, noodle, salad. The difference. My daughter-in-law, too. My daughter-in-law sister's daughter -- she's a Wainstock.**

The pharmacist?

**Yeah. His daughter's my daughter-in-law.**

Oh! Yeah. Yeah, we used him all the time.

**Yeah.**

He passed away a long time ago.

**Oh, yeah. A long time ago. He passed away, was 18 years ago – 17 years. Yeah. I come to them and one -- the twin sisters, the two sisters, the twins. One married Krigel's – the jeweler – son. She's a lawyer and he's a lawyer.**

Oh, neat.

**And I come to them and they make parties and right away they call me. "Molly, get ready. They're moving. They get ready." They go in restaurant and order special food for me.**

That's nice. That's good.

**They don't -- they sat down with me, they give me [unclear] to drink -- very sweet, very sweet. I can't ask for better.**

Really? What would you attribute... What would you attribute your ability to adjust to a normal life after the war? What allowed you to adjust, adapt?

**I adjusted to kosher food.**

I, I don't mean just food. I mean just life in general.

**Life in general? I go to synagogues and praying. We pay -- we send the kids to *cheder*. We send them to religion schools. We just -- when they -- let me tell you something. When I come in this country, I brought the two kids, I live at Holmes [and] 24<sup>th</sup>, synagogue was on Paseo.**

Right. Yeah.

**I took my kids to Paseo. I hear -- don't know nothing. Nobody tell me, but I come in Swope Park and I listen to the -- all the refugees talking and open up my eyes. And I said, "Okay, kids, after school, we going to the synagogue and you going to have Hebrew."**

Going to have what?

**Hebrew.**

Oh, Hebrew?

**Will learn Hebrew. I went [unclear] to 25<sup>th</sup> and Paseo. You know what they told me? “We got 800 kids. I can’t take your kids – no more.” And I said, “What? That’s horrible! My kids survived Hitler. I survived Hitler. Now you don’t go take my kids to the Hebrew school?” “We can’t afford it. Go across the street.” That was another synagogue.**

Yeah, some temple.

**Nah! No temple.**

No temple?

**No. There was Rabbi Danziger – Rabbi Danziger. They call each others. “I got some two refugees and our school is full. Maybe you will take them?” He said, “Yes, send them to me.” I go to him. He want 250 dollars a year.**

Wow!

**I said, “I don’t even have 50 dollars. I don’t even have 25 dollars. Why you can’t afford for me?” I said, “I’m not comin’ cryin’ for you. When I’m gonna have it, I’m gonna pay it.” And he said, “No. Go over there.” I went over there. [Unclear sentence.] And I said, “This is two kids. Look at my darling children! Beautiful children!” And they said to me, “You know what? Bring the kids.” I said, “Okay. How much will it cost me?” Of course, they were surprised why I can’t afford it. “Want me to send ‘em to church? My husband don’t need it, he works. We need to make a living.” Said, “I’ll go take care for him.” He said, “No.”**

[Recording ends]