

DP-26

VERNA TRILL HORVATH

BIRTH DATE: 1904

INTERVIEW DATE: MAY 23, 1989

RUNNING TIME: 1:00:00

INTERVIEWER: ANDREW PHILLIPS

RECORDING ENGINEER: UNKNOWN

INTERVIEW LOCATION: SANTA ANA, CA

TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 1989

TRANSCRIPT RECONCEIVED BY: NANCY VEGA, 10/1995

TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

HUNGARY, 1913

AGE 9

SHIP NAME NOT RECALLED

PHILLIPS: This is Andrew Phillips and I'm speaking with Verna Horvath. How do you pronounce your name?

HORVATH: Horvath.

PHILLIPS: H-O-R-V-A-T-H. Her maiden name is Trill, T-R-I-L-L. And this interview is being conducted on the 23rd of May, 1989, Tuesday morning. We're starting the interview at 11:30. And Mrs. Horvath immigrated from Hungary in what year?

HORVATH: 1913.

PHILLIPS: And what year were you born?

HORVATH: 1904. Nineteen four.

PHILLIPS: Okay. So if we could start. Mrs. Horvath, can you, perhaps, tell me about your first memories of where you lived. Start by telling us exactly where that was in Hungary.

HORVATH: It was a little village called Surany. You want me to pronounce the names?

PHILLIPS: Could you pronounce and spell the name for me.

HORVATH: S-U-R-A-N-Y. And it was in the country of Bereg, B-E-R-E-G. And it was a two-street village and I went to Catholic school there for three years before I immigrated. And, uh, my father came to this country in 1911.

PHILLIPS: Before you talk about leaving Hungary, can you perhaps tell us a little bit about what life was like. What did your father do for a living in Hungary?

HORVATH: He was, uh, he worked for a big landowner and he was

a sharecropper. And then the landowner would take certain amount of the share, what was raised, and then hand some to the workers, which is, that's what I understand, that that's what he did. And I know my mother complained so much about the flour that was given to her, that when she baked bread it was the lowest part of the wheat, or whatever, she said that sometimes the bread turned out like mud. So, uh, those are the things what happened, and you weren't allowed to own any land or anything because you were a peasant. You were, my father was born a peasant. And, uh, so he always, although he served in the Army and he read, my father read a lot, and he was very discontented with what went on there, you know, being, working for other people, and you could never express yourself. And, uh, so he was determined to come to this country.

PHILLIPS: What kind of food, what kind of crops did your father grow?

HORVATH: Well, my mother would have beans, mostly beans.
(she laughs) I was, she, they used to make their own sauerkraut and everything. My mother made bean

soup with sauerkraut and I said if I ever live to be able to do what I do, I will never have beans and sauerkraut soup as long as I live, and I never have. (she laughs) But my sister says she makes it sometimes, just to bring back old memories, you know.

PHILLIPS: Do you remember how it was made?

HORVATH: Yes. She browned a little flour and then we'd have, we had a cow, I guess, just for milk purposes, but the butter we used to sell so she could make a few cents. She was a dressmaker, my mother was. And then they had the barter system where they'd give her butter or, I mean, well, she would sell the butter to buy shoes and everything for us. So we never had butter, and to this day I don't eat butter on my bread. So, uh, she had a cow and she had a few chickens and then she was a dressmaker. So we got eggs and meat. And once a month they killed a beef in the village, or a cow, and then we'd have been once a month. That's, I can remember that. And, uh, and that's all. And my mother used to take me in the woods, you know, to pick dry wood, you know, for the fireplace, for the stove. And, uh, and I remember

one time she'd load my back with wood and I was only about seven years old and, uh, and when I stood up I fell back. And I remember her holding that pile of wood. She had a pile on her back, and she was holding the pile of wood, and I was walking underneath it till we got home. So, uh, that, I remember that. And one time when we were picking dry wood in the forest, they sicced the dog on us, the forest men, you know, that took care of the forest. He sicced the dog on my mother, the dogs on my mother. So we went home without wood that day, I remember that. But, and that's about, that's what I can remember about our lives.

PHILLIPS: You're describing that scene with your mother supporting the wood. Was she walking behind you carrying . . .

HORVATH: She was walking next to me. She was walking next to me holding, holding it up so that it wouldn't be so heavy for me to carry. Because when I stood up, I fell back, and then she helped me get up. And then, as we were walking home, she held this, uh, the pile of wood, to make it lighter for me. That I remember.

PHILLIPS: I'm just going to move that microphone a little bit so that . . . (break in tape) I wonder if you could . . . A little bit more. Hang on. You were beginning to tell me about that recipe for beans and sauerkraut, just in case someone's interested in the recipe, why don't you tell us what it was.

PHILLIPS: Well, she browned some flour, a little flour in some shortening, I guess, because after I got older, she made it here in this country, too, which is what made me hate it all the more. And, uh, she'd brown a little flour and then put water in it and a little sour cream and, uh, and she'd cook, she'd soak the beans overnight, and then the next day she'd cook the beans and put sauerkraut in with it, and then put sour cream in and make it a little richer. But, uh, I didn't like it anyway.

PHILLIPS: What sort of beans were they?

HORVATH: They were the regular beans what they have, the Mexicans have out here now. Um, I can't think of what the name of it is.

PHILLIPS: Tell me about the conditions in the house, and what

kind of house you lived it.

HORVATH: Well, the conditions in the house was, we didn't have carpeting, we didn't have floors. It was, I remember it was yellow, painted yellow, and it was mud floor. And then we had, uh, we had mattresses made from hay, and then, of course, we had down, down, uh, they called them doonos. They were comforters, but they were the big, fluffy kind. Those were the ones that my mother used to pick duck feathers and things and made them, they made them themselves. So that's the kind of bed we had. And then there was only one room, of course. There was no extra rooms. Everybody lived in one room.

PHILLIPS: Tell me about the kitchen.

HORVATH: The kitchen, there was no kitchen. The kitchen was right in there, in that one room, but it was in the corner of the room, I remember. And, uh, that's, and then, of course, the outside of the houses, and the walls inside, were whitewashed, you know, they were, I remember my mother whitewashing the walls, and my father outside of the houses.

PHILLIPS: You used to . . .

HORVATH: Of course . . .

PHILLIPS: Sorry, go on.

HORVATH: I don't remember too much about my father because, see, I was too young when he left. I was only six when he left, so.

PHILLIPS: You used to have to cook over a fire, I suppose.

HORVATH: Oh, yeah. There was an oven made out of clay, or whatever, you know. And then I remember there was a hole in it where my mother used to, they, she used to heat it up and then bake the bread in there after the oven got heated.

PHILLIPS: What was the bread like?

HORVATH: Well, sometimes it was all right, but sometimes it wasn't good, you know. Like I say, sometimes she'd, they'd get good flour, sometimes they'd get bad flour. And, uh, and that's when she used to grumble all the time because why couldn't it be good all the time, you know.

PHILLIPS: How many were in your family and living in this house?

HORVATH: Just, there was, my brother was, my brother was a baby. He was born shortly after my father left. The four of us, my mother and my sister, she was two years younger than I was, and I. The three of us, four of us.

PHILLIPS: Do you remember if there was a market in town, and going to the market?

HORVATH: Only when, oh, yes. I think there was a store that was owned by a little Jewish lady that my mother used to go and buy her threads and stuff. It was sort of a, like I told you, she was a dressmaker and she used to go and buy her threads there at this little store. That's all I remember. But when they killed this beef, then everybody would go to one place, I think it was, uh, I can't remember now exactly how it was butchered, but I know everybody used to go and they'd have certain amounts of meat. And we'd have soup. My mother would make soup meat. But she always had a garden and, uh, and there were no, uh, there were outhouses, of course. There were no baths.

Outhouses, we had. So that's about all I can remember about Europe except when we were ready to leave my mother took us, we lived five miles from, from, uh, Bereg, which was taken over by Czechoslovakia now. It's Beregszasz. It's called Beregszasz. B-E-R-E-G-S-Z-A-S-Z, Beregszasz. It belongs to Czechoslovakia now. And that was five miles from our village. And my mother took us in there, and we had our pictures taken to come to the United States. And, uh, I still have those pictures. And, uh, that's all. And then we left for United States.

PHILLIPS: How did you actually travel there? Did you travel in a train, or by . . .

HORVATH: Uh, we went, we, uh, we went to Fiume, which was, Fiume, I think, was in Italy.

PHILLIPS: Could you spell that?

HORVATH: F-I-U-M-E. Fiume. And I think it was a port in Italy that we had to travel to.

PHILLIPS: How did you actually, before we get to that actual trip, can you give us some description and some idea

of what it felt like to be actually leaving home. Of course, you were very young. But do you have any, do you remember any of your feelings about leaving?

HORVATH: No, I don't. I don't remember any of my feelings but I, I remember that my mother's sister came with us to have our pictures taken and she, uh, she took care of everything. She took care of disposing of all our things there, and my grandmother, her and my grand, my mother's sister, my grandmother, my mother's mother, and they, I remember them coming in, and they said they'll take care of everything. That's all I remember. And then we went to Beregszasz, and we boarded a train to Fiume. And then that's, that I remember in Fiume, that what I remember is because I was going up a high flight of stairs and I dropped a suitcase. I was carrying a suitcase. My mother had her stuff on her back and she was carrying some, and she was carrying my brother. He was only a year old. And, uh, two years old, almost two. And, uh, she was carrying him, and I was carrying this suitcase and this, the lid of this suitcase opened up and all the food and everything we had in there came tumbling down these steps, and I had to pick it all up.

That's how I remember Fiume. These are things that happened that I couldn't forget because I was involved in it, you know, at the time. And so, uh, and then, you want me to go on to how long it took us to get here.

PHILLIPS: Yeah, I think. Can you just, can you remember about any stories or anything that your mother or your father might have told you about their lives, living in Hungary, anything that stood out in your mind or in your memory about their lives.

HORVATH: That's the thing that I was telling you, that my father served in the Army and he was reading books, and he read about other countries and everything, and he was very dissatisfied with his condition. Because no matter how hard you worked, you couldn't get ahead. If you were born a peasant, you died a peasant, at that time, at that time in Hungary. And he was, he was very dissatisfied with the conditions. So that's why he was determined, under any condition, that he even borrowed money, I guess, that he could come out, come to this country. And I have no idea, I couldn't tell you anything about his, his life,

except only that he was very dissatisfied.

Because . . .

PHILLIPS: Do you know why he decided, you told me why he decided to leave, but why particularly he decided to come to the United States. For instance, did he have relatives here, or had he just read about it, or what was the reason?

HORVATH: He had, he had somebody here, some, either friends or relatives. Oh, I think there were other Trills here that helped him. Yeah. There were other, either a cousin or somebody by the name of Trill that helped him come out to this country. That's all I can remember.

PHILLIPS: Okay. So tell us a little bit about actually leaving Hungary and, uh, what year was this that you were . . .

HORVATH: 1913, September.

PHILLIPS: So this was before the first World War.

HORVATH: Yes, before the first World War. The war broke out shortly after. Around 1914 the war broke out, yeah.

PHILLIPS: Do you remember the atmosphere in Europe at that time? Were you too young, perhaps to remember that? Or do you get, have any feelings, or any sense of what it was like, pre-war, in Hungary?

HORVATH: Well, there were, they were taking boys for the army. Because my, uh, my mother wanted to bring her brother out here because he was going to be inducted into the service. And this brother, the brother that was eligible for the army, he backed out the last minute, so another brother took over, took, came instead. So she, uh, she came out, this one brother came out with my mother. But, uh, one that was to be inducted into this army, he didn't come, he didn't want to come, so he stayed back. And, uh, I think he served in the army, but he wasn't killed. Now, Mr. Horvath's uncle, he was killed in the first World War, his mother's brother. I remember her talking about that. He was killed. But that's all I remember about them preparing for war.

PHILLIPS: Okay. So now take us on your journey from your home to Italy, and you're about to leave for the United States. Tell us about when you actually left, what

happened?

HORVATH: That's all I remember is that we left and we went to Beregszasz, and we boarded the train to the two-hour embarkation point, which was Fiume.

PHILLIPS: And where did you stay? The place where your food fell down the stairs, where was that?

HORVATH: Oh, we just slept on the benches. We don't stay, didn't stay anywhere. I don't remember ever staying in any, any, uh, hotel or anything. We just slept on benches. If we had to stay overnight, we slept on benches.

PHILLIPS: Where were the benches?

HORVATH: Right there in the terminal, or whatever, that I could remember. And then, when we boarded the ship then, and we were on ship for twenty-one days, and we, it seemed to me like we were stopping at ports. I remember we stopped at a port where my mother, uh, gave some money, and they lowered a basket from the ship and we got oranges. I have no idea what port it was in. I was no historian, so I wasn't taking notes or anything. But I remember standing next to my

mother when this basket came up from a little boat down next to the big ship. And then they brought the oranges up, and we had, the first time in my life I had orange. And, uh, and then . . .

PHILLIPS: Do you remember that you thought, what you felt, when you had that orange?

HORVATH: (she laughs) Well, well, it was very good. I liked it very much. But coming on the ship there my sister, she was two years younger, she was vomiting every day, that poor kid. And I wasn't sick a day. I can't understand it. Even to this day I don't get sick on a ship. But I wasn't sick at all, and that poor, poor child was sick all the time, I remember how. And we were in back, down in the hold, all of us. We all slept in hammocks and things like that, you know. And, uh, and that's all I remember about the ship except the morning it was, the day was just breaking when we arrived in New York. And someone said that, "There's the Statue of Liberty." And we, uh, we came running up from down below, and they had, they had chains all across the deck of the ship, and I remember one woman, she fell, and her nose was

bleeding and every. And we were, we all ran to the rail, you know, so we could see the Statue of Liberty. So then we were taken off of the ship and, uh, my mother . . . (a clock chimes) My brother, oh, then you had physicals on Ellis Island. You had physicals, and if you have anything wrong with you. Well, my brother had some problem with his eye, the baby. He had, uh, something wrong with his eye, and she was held back because of that. And I can't remember how we ever got away from my mother, but they put us on the ferry to take us to the mainland, and my mother stayed behind. and we were on the ferry, and the ferry was pulling away, and my mother realized that she saw us right by the, they had a wire gate across the back, you know, that they closed off after the people got on. And my mother saw us there, and she started screaming and yelling. And they had to bring the ferry back and pick her up. And then, uh, I think it was on the mainland that my father was summoned and he had to, he had to get a lawyer to get us out of New York. He had to hire a lawyer because of the trouble with my brother's eyes, and he didn't want us to be shipped back to Europe or anything. So I can't, you know, being eight years

old, I can't remember all the details of this, uh, this trouble that they were having, but my father had to sign some papers, and he had to have co-signers and everything. So I guess that they wouldn't be what I understood, from now on, that they wouldn't be a liability on the state, you know, on the state of, or the country, or whatever. That's what I remember.

PHILLIPS: What was wrong with your brother's eyes?

HORVATH: Uh, he had, I guess he had some sore in his eye or something. And to this day he has to have special glasses because he's got scars on it. It healed, but he's got scars on his eyes.

PHILLIPS: So what did, do you remember what the situation was when your father was, he would have been on the mainland and you would have been on Ellis Island.

HORVATH: My father wasn't on the mainland. He was in Cleveland. We had to board a train in New York and come to Cleveland.

PHILLIPS: Okay. Well, before we do that, all right, I see. So before we do that, you're on Ellis Island, and you're being processed.

HORVATH: Yes. We were processed on Ellis Island. My brother was, my mother was being processed with my brother, because of his eyes. And I don't know how he got away from it. We were either walking, or she was held back, or something, but I remember we got on the ferry. How we got on the ferry, I can't remember. But we were on the ferry, and she wasn't. And that's when she raised all this ruckus, you know, that they had to bring the ferry back and pick her up.

PHILLIPS: Because you'd been separated.

HORVATH: Yeah, because we were separated. And heaven knows, she didn't know whether she'd ever find us or not. But that was, her and my brother were left, and my sister and I, we were with our suitcases that I was carrying, you know, what I could carry. And bundles, we had pillows, you know, that we brought with us. And, uh . . .

PHILLIPS: It was goose down pillows.

HORVATH: Yeah. She wouldn't leave those behind because, you know, you have to strip. You sit for nights and nights and nights and you strip feathers for those

things. And my mother just wouldn't leave those behind. She brought those with her. Of course, they weren't heavy to carry, so I helped with that.

PHILLIPS: Can you remember making those pillows, or your mother making those pillows?

HORVATH: No, but I remember stripping feathers.

PHILLIPS: Can you tell us a bit about that?

HORVATH: (she laughs) Well, there isn't much to tell. You just sit and, you just sit and they take these feathers, and the real hard core from the center, and you just strip, keep stripping them off. And that's how you get . . . And, of course, the down doesn't have them, but the feathers you have to strip, where the down is, you know, soft. It's just from the belly of the goose, and it's real soft down. That you don't have to strip. But the feathers you strip. But my mother wouldn't leave the feathers either.

PHILLIPS: So what happens to the goose after all of this?

HORVATH: (she laughs) They get killed, I guess. But, uh, and then I remember seeing her stuff goose. She'd

stuff corn down him, you know, fatten him up, just before, geese, rather, geese. And, uh, she'd stuff corn down his throat, and then you'd get a nice, big liver, big fat liver, and we'd have goose liver, whatever. And that I remember her, seeing her do.

PHILLIPS: How did she actually do it?

HORVATH: She just opened his mouth and stuffed corn down him, make him eat more than he wanted on his own. So that was to fatten him up. Those are the only things I remember now, except that then we came to Cleveland. From New York we boarded the train, and came to New York. My father met us at the station, took us home. It was on a Saturday night. And, uh, he had a boarding house for my mother. I think ten boarders. Put her to work right away. So, and he said he's going to go to the market. We didn't live far from the West Side Market in Cleveland. So he said he's going to the market, he's going to bring something that we've never eaten before. So he went and bought some bananas. And, oh! We hated to disappoint him, but it was the most awful stuff that I have ever eaten. You know, it was soft and smooth and mushy

and I didn't like it at all. But I swallowed it anyhow just to please my father. But since then, I love bananas and every time I eat a banana I think of that Saturday night when we arrived in Cleveland and I had a banana that I didn't like. So, and then, that's a good long time ago. And the memory always comes back. Now, what else do you want me to remember? (she laughs) Is there anything else you can suggest?

PHILLIPS: Yes. Tell us a little bit about what your father was doing in Cleveland, about this guest house that he had going. How long had he been there before you arrived?

HORVATH: He was in this country two years before we came, two years. And he was working for White Sewing Machine Company. And he was working on cabinets, sewing machine cabinets that he was refinishing, finishing, you know, rubbing and finishing. That's, that's why I remember. And, uh, he was making a dollar a day. Can you imagine? A dollar a day. And in those days they had no welfare, no nothing. But my mother, even in a postage stamp lot, my mother always had a

garden. And she cooked out of her garden, and it was a big help all the time. And I remember my father coming home from work, and he'd always save a little bit of his sandwich for us kids. And we'd run ahead, you know, and meet him, and we'd eat this piece of bread or sandwich, whatever was left all day long in his lunchbucket, and we were so happy to eat it. And we never knew, we never knew we were poor until one Thanksgiving we found a basket on our doorstep. Other people thought we were poor, but we didn't think so. We thought we were doing all right, you know. Of course we were never, we never had, we come home from school and we had bread with mustard on it, or bread with sugar on it. And, that I remember. Because we started school right away, we went to parochial school. And that's where Mr. Horvath went to. So, that I can remember. And then when I got to be twelve years old my father was, he went to work, he wanted to make more money, of course, and he went to work in a steel mill. And then he was, in the steel mill he was, uh, crushed by some steel against a boxcar or something. Anyway, I remember he was, he was in the hospital for eight months. And then my aunt was working in a berry factory, and she got me a

job, and I never divulged my age because I was born in Europe and they couldn't verify it here. So, uh, she got me a job as, supplying berries for these ladies that would sit and clean strawberries, you know. And that was my job when I was twelve years old when my father was in the hospital. So that's when I started working. I was twelve years old.

PHILLIPS: Did your father receive . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

PHILLIPS: Okay. This is continuing our interview with Mrs. Verna Horvath on side two, cassette number 400. That is the number of this interview number 400 [DP-26]. So you're in Cleveland and your father was ill in the hospital. You said he . . .

HORVATH: It was after we had arrived. We were here about a year, over a year, when he went for this other job at the steel mill, because he was only making a dollar a day at the sewing machine factory. So, uh, he wanted to better himself, so he went to work in the steel mills.

PHILLIPS: Did he talk, how long did he work in the steel mill in Cleveland?

HORVATH: Uh, I can't remember. That I can't remember.

PHILLIPS: Was it many years, or just a short time?

HORVATH: Oh, he kept working. After he got well, he went back and he was working. So they kept his job for him till he came back.

PHILLIPS: Do you have any recollections of what it was like for your father to work in the steel mill? Did he talk about his work there?

HORVATH: Yeah. He used to talk about it, but I can't say it on the thing what he said, on the tape.
(she laughs)

PHILLIPS: He didn't like it.

HORVATH: He liked, he had trouble learning, he had trouble learning the language. In fact, he never did learn the language because where he worked they were, he had a Hungarian supervisor, and he never cared to learn to, the English language. He never had any use it, so he didn't bother. And he thought he was too

old to learn anyway, you know. Certain times in your life, I told him, I said, I said, "Pa," I said, "we're in this country," I said. "You can do this country the honor of learning its language because instead of having black bread and clabber for some of your meals, we have pork chops and potatoes. And," I says, "that deserves a nice respect of learning the language of this country." But he never, he didn't, it was too hard for him. Certain words he would speak, but not, he never talked fluently.

PHILLIPS: What is clabber.

HORVATH: Clabber is yogurt, sour milk.

PHILLIPS: How do you spell it?

HORVATH: C-L-A-B-B-E-R is the only way I could know that it would be spelled. But it's, they, my mother used to put fresh milk, you can't get clabber out of homogenized milk. You have to have whole milk. She used to put it in a crock, she'd put it on the edge of the stove where it was warm and it would solidify, and that's clabber. A lot of European people know about it, you know, like the Germans know what

clabber is. And, uh, and that was, sometimes that was the limit of our meal back home. Bread, that my mother baked, and clabber. So, and then we came to this country and everything got to be so good, you know, it was wonderful and I thought, I thought it was wonderful because, you know, a child has the impressions that are good and bad and, uh, I always urged my father to learn to speak. And then, then, of course, when he did become a citizen, and he had to learn the language, and he couldn't. So I put all the questions and answers down in Hungarian, what is the Constitution, I wrote it out in Hungarian, I wrote all the questions and answers, and he studied them day and night. And he went for his citizen papers and he passed. He, they asked him the question and he'd answer. He knew the answers. But when he appeared in front of the judge, the judge said to him, asked him something else besides what he studied, he asked him how long him and his wife were married. And my father just looked at him dumbfounded, didn't know what he said. And the judge said, uh, "How you ever passed your examination, I'll never know." But we didn't explain to him how he passed it, but he passed it. And he became a

citizen. But I was after him all the time to become a citizen, no matter how, I was determined he was going to become one. So, and that's all I remember about my father being a citizen. And I can't exactly, could you remember where Pa worked before he died?

HORVATH: What?

MR. HORVATH: Where my father worked before he died? I seem to forget where my father worked before he died.

MR. HORVATH: After White Sewing Machine he went back.

HORVATH: He went back?

MR. HORVATH: Yeah.

HORVATH: Oh.

MR. HORVATH: Then he took sick.

HORVATH: Oh, yeah.

MR. HORVATH: You should also mention that, uh, chick and I were betting on the outcome of his citizenship.

HORVATH: Oh, yeah. My husband and my brother-in-law made bets

that my father would never pass his citizenship.

PHILLIPS: So tell me about going to school here and, uh, what life was like in the schoolroom when you first arrived.

HORVATH: Well, what I could, well, I went to parochial school, naturally, which was right near where we lived. It was always, we had to go near to school. And, uh, he was in, he was in my class, and I was pretty big for my age always, so the teacher would call me to take care of the classroom when she left, and he was mischievous all the time. His name was on the board. And then he'd, we'd come out of school, and it was wintertime, and he'd batter me with snowballs, you know, because of putting his name on the board. That I can remember. And, uh, the thing that, I had the impression that all the priests and the nuns never went to the toilet. That's the impression I had when I was, I remember that when I was, when I started going to school. I thought they were just, they were superhuman, or something. That they didn't have, in fact, we, in those days, they didn't, you didn't study about, uh, sex like you do today, and all those

things, you know, how things happen. I never knew how babies happened either, because my mother-in-law would get letters from Europe and, uh, they would be saying they got another baby, they got another baby, and my mother would keep sending money and she says, "Why do you always have to have babies?" And they wrote back to her and they says, "Well, it's easy for you to say, but why don't you write and tell us how not to have them?" I remember my mother telling me that. And, uh, I think my mother and I were close about everything, because even when I was little, like I told you, that she'd take me along with her, you know, to pick wood, and I was with her all the time, through hard times and things.

PHILLIPS: Did she talk to you about some of those questions, birth control and that kind of thing?

HORVATH: No, uh-uh. No.

PHILLIPS: It wasn't something that was done.

HORVATH: No. Even when I, in those days, even in schools they never discussed anything like that, you know. They never, we never studied, unless you went to high

school, which I never did. Biology I, you know, you don't study until you get to high school, so, and I never got that, like I told you, I left school when I was twelve years old.

PHILLIPS: You said your mother sent money back to your home in Hungary.

HORVATH: Yes, she always did, and packages, packages. I remember sewing packages into canvas and sending packages home all the time. And even, even when my mother got close to eighty years old, she was sending packages. And this brother of hers wrote and wanted her to keep sending money and money and money, and I wrote and told him, I said, he was my age, he was born about the same time I was, and I wrote and told him, I says, "If you think my mother's picking the money off the trees, why don't you come out and help her pick it." And, uh, I got tired of, I was the one that was hauling all these big packages to the post office. And it was never enough. They never got enough. They never got enough money, they never had enough packages. No.

PHILLIPS: What was in these packages? What sort of . . .

HORVATH: Clothing. Clothing. She, uh, she'd buy clothing, like silk stockings and things like that that she would send. Although I think they used to sell most of those over there, you know. But, uh, that's all I remember, that we were always sending packages, even before my mother died. She was eighty-seven. Even before she, close to eighty, she was still sending packages.

PHILLIPS: Now, tell me about meeting your husband, your future husband, at school. He was another Hungarian. Were you . . .

HORVATH: He was an altar boy all the time but I don't know. In class he didn't behave himself somehow, because other, how would his name get on the board all the time. But it seems like we've known each other forever, huh?

MR. HORVATH: She just had it in for me, even if I blinked.

HORVATH: Oh, go on. (she laughs) It seems like we've known each other forever, like marriage for us isn't a word, it's a sentence. We're married sixty-three years.

MR. HORVATH: I got even with her. I married her.

(they laugh)

HORVATH: We've got two beautiful children. There's Margaret. There's a picture of Margaret over there. That's the one you talked to. And then, and we have great-grandchildren. Those twins up there on the mantle.

MR. HORVATH: Just recently.

HORVATH: Those are our great-grandchildren. Their parents, my grandson and his wife were married ten years, and then they got the twins. They got a handful. And that's my son over there holding the twins. So, two children is all we had.

PHILLIPS: Was the community in Cleveland that you lived in, were there many Hungarians?

HORVATH: It was an ethnic group, yeah. It was an ethnic, mostly. But my, uh, my first teacher, when I first came to this country now, they're having so much problems here in California about having teachers speaking Spanish and everything. When I first came to this country I went to school, and one, in one

class, they had all ages of children. And what they taught us was English, how to speak English. And then they'd put us into our, after I learned how to, after we learned how to understand English, then they put me in the third grade, because that's where I left when I was in Europe. Then they put me in the third grade, and they put the older children in their respective grades, but they had to understand English first. And now they seem to be having so much problems about having teachers speaking more than English language. Especially here, you know, with all these Mexicans coming in. And, uh, that's what I remember, and my teacher was a colored teacher. She lived on our street, she lived down the street. She was a beautiful person, a beautiful lady. I thought she was very pretty. And then, um, then upstairs, where my mother lived, downstairs, upstairs there was a colored lady with a son that belonged, he was a tap dancer in Keith's, in Keith's circuit, it was called, Keith's, yeah, Keith's Circuit.

PHILLIPS: How do you spell that?

HORVATH: Keith. K-E-I-T-H. Keith. Circuit.

PHILLIPS: What is that?

HORVATH: It was a group of entertainers that used to travel, uh, from city to city, you know, and they'd entertain in theaters.

PHILLIPS: Did you hear him practicing?

HORVATH: Yeah. We used to hear him practicing. And then occasionally he would come home, you know, and visit his mother. And, uh, she was a sweet lady. She let us see the funny papers every Sunday. So, Mrs. Mayo was her name.

PHILLIPS: Did you meet her son?

HORVATH: Oh, yeah. He used to talk to us and everything when he was home. He didn't stay home very long. He was mostly on the road.

PHILLIPS: It sounds like there wasn't a problem with racial discrimination.

HORVATH: No, no. No, no. There wasn't, uh, we didn't think, you know, you didn't think anything about them being a different color or anything. You just, they were nice people, and you went into their homes and I

remember that this, my teacher, Mrs., Miss Hansbury, her name was, her brother went to Baldwin Wallace College and he, uh, jumped into the quarry, swimming, and he drowned. And I remember how, how we cried and because the family, you know, we'd go in and the family all cried. I remember that. Of course, you know, we were, her living on our street, naturally, being my teacher, I would be acquainted with her.

PHILLIPS: In your class at school, how much ethnic diversity was there?

HORVATH: None.

PHILLIPS: Let me, were there, there were Hungarians. I mean, you were of Hungarian extraction. Were there people from other countries?

HORVATH: No, no. When I first came, when I first arrived here, I went to public school. That's where I met Miss Hansbury. She didn't teach in the parochial school. And then after I learned how to speak English, then my mother put us into parochial school. Because in those days they, if, when you were a Catholic, if your children didn't go to Catholic

school, you couldn't go to confession or communion, you know. So my mother, after I started at public school and I learned how to speak English, then she put us into parochial school.

PHILLIPS: At school you studied until what age? How old were you when you left school?

HORVATH: Twelve.

PHILLIPS: Twelve. You went to work in the berry factory.

HORVATH: I went to, yeah.

PHILLIPS: Uh, can you tell us a little bit more about working in the berry factory? It was a strawberry factory, was it, or . . .

HORVATH: Yeah, well, all kinds of foods. They made jams, you know. It was . . .

PHILLIPS: Where did the berries come from?

HORVATH: From the fields. On Sundays they used to pick us up in a truck, and they'd take us out to farms, and we'd pick berries, you know. The children, most of the children that were big enough, we'd all go to work,

you know. And I think we got paid a penny a box for berries.

PHILLIPS: How big was the box?

HORVATH: I'm not sure now. These quart boxes.

MR. HORVATH: Like those . . .

HORVATH: Yeah. Those quart boxes, I think they were the quart size, yeah.

MR. HORVATH: About three-and-a-half square, like we have here in stores and stuff.

HORVATH: And then a few cents we'd make, you know, naturally, would go to my mother. Of course, when I went to work, all the money that I ever earned always went to my family, you know, my mother. I always gave it to my mother.

PHILLIPS: How difficult was that work? Was that hard work? Working in the fields?

HORVATH: Well, in the fields, kids don't realize how hard they're working. You know, they don't, you just do what you're supposed to do. And I thought my work,

when my aunt got me this job there, it wasn't anything. All these crates would come in with fruit. And then I'd just take them and these ladies were all sitting in a row and cleaning them, you know, and I would see to it that they had enough to clean. That was my job.

PHILLIPS: What was, what did you do after that? What was, how long did you work there?

HORVATH: And then, well, I didn't work very long after that. Then I went to work in a factory where we were making army uniforms because, see, we went, the War broke out in '14 and I think in '15 we joined in, the United States, went in shortly after. Well, I was working on army uniforms in a factory. Then I was sixteen, you know, already. Not sixteen, let's see, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, about fifteen or something like that, fifteen.

PHILLIPS: Tell us about working in that factory. What was that like?

HORVATH: Well, they'd have, it was a production work, naturally. You know, everything was cut in piles,

and certain jobs, certain girls were assigned a certain type of seaming, you know, and then they would go to another girl and she'd do the other type of seaming. And, uh, that's what I remember.

PHILLIPS: And what happened, and then the war finished? Did you work there through the duration of the war?

HORVATH: I don't think so. I don't think so, because they wanted my birth certificate, and I wasn't sixteen yet, and I couldn't produce it. So I would get laid off because the government would get after. I think the child labor laws started shortly after I came to this country, and then they insisted on birth certificates. So during the war I couldn't, I couldn't get it anyway, so I was working. But when the war was over, then they insisted on birth certificates.

PHILLIPS: And you, and you, in fact, you wanted to work to earn the money.

HORVATH: Yes. We had to. I had to work, you know. But, uh, but I, I hate to use that word, you know, sometimes nobody, you know, speaking in, they always say, "You

know, you know." I can't remember too much.

PHILLIPS: So after the war you, uh, what happened?

HORVATH: After the war?

PHILLIPS: What did you do?

HORVATH: Oh, I went wherever I could get a job.

PHILLIPS: Was it tough, the men coming home?

HORVATH: Not too tough. I was a, I was mostly a seamstress. After I was working on making uniforms, you know that, I didn't have no trouble getting that job, then after I got that job, then I went to work at making men's suits. I remember I was sixteen years old at the tie and, uh, I got a job there sewing men's suits. And then I stayed there until I got married, and then I didn't work then because, oh, yeah, I worked, yeah, I worked through all that. I worked there, uh, then my mother sent me to beauty school to study beauty work. She said she was going to take care of my son. He was born then, Jimmy was born then. And she said, "Go to school and learn something," so that I wouldn't have to work so hard.

So I went to beauty school, and then I finished there and then I was working in a beauty shop until the Depression. Then the Depression came and, uh, naturally beauty work slowed down quite a bit during that time. So I went back to the factory where I made suits and they hired me for eighteen cents an hour. Can you imagine, eighteen cents an hour? And what they're making today, they won't work for four twenty-five an hour, and I worked for eighteen cents an hour. I was glad to get the job because I applied as a charwoman and everything, to get a job. He was working, oh, maybe one day a week or two days a week, but the company held him, but he wasn't making much, so I had to work. And, uh, when the bank closed we had eight hundred in the bank, we lost that. We couldn't pay the rent. We moved in with my in-laws, and that's when I went back to work. Margaret was nine months old then. I had Jimmy and Margaret. Then I got the job for eighteen cents an hour. And then I was, I earned that for about two weeks, then I went on piecework. Then I made a little better, you know, with piecework. You make what you earn. So, that's, that was our life. How much, how many more questions have you got? (she laughs) How many

more questions have you got? Huh?

PHILLIPS: Not very many more.

HORVATH: Not many more.

PHILLIPS: So, uh, I guess that's about it. After the war you, uh, what did, what did your husband do?

HORVATH: I worked for a bolt and nut company. I started out as a machinist and later finished up there as a toolmaker. I worked there for forty-four years. Lamson and Sesion (?) Company.

PHILLIPS: Forty-four years. And your husband immigrated to the United States also from Hungary. Can you tell us, just for the record, what town he came from in Hungary, and spell that for us?

HORVATH: Well, uh, he came from, he came from the County of Soprony. You want me to spell it? S-O-P-R-O-N-Y. And the name of the town was . . .

MR. HORVATH: Sebes.

HORVATH: Uh, wasn't it Vague? (voices off mike)

MR. HORVATH: No. Vague was where the Nemetz come from.

HORVATH: The name of his village was Sebes. S-E-B-E-S.
Sebes.

PHILLIPS: And what year was your husband born?

HORVATH: He was born in 1904.

PHILLIPS: Also. And immigrated?

HORVATH: He immigrated in 1913, the same year we did.

PHILLIPS: I see, okay. And, uh, how long, and then you moved
from Cleveland to Los Angeles?

HORVATH: We stayed in Cleveland for sixty, fifty-five or sixty
years, and then my daughter and son-in-law bought
this house and they sent us the pictures and said,
"This is your retirement home." So when we both
reached sixty-five I was working in a store making
draperies and, uh, we both retired at sixty-five, and
then we came out here.

PHILLIPS: And you've been living here ever since.

HORVATH: And we've been living here ever since.

MR. HORVATH: The reason is we'd come out here on my vacation. I was the oldest one in there, and I had four weeks coming. All the other would have got two weeks, a week-and-a-half, something like that. Well, anyway, we came out to see our daughter, first time in California. And that's when we fell in love with California. Ever, if we ever do retire, we're coming out here. So we're here, and like it.

HORVATH: Yeah. I think the climate is wonderful.

MR. HORVATH: Plenty, I shoveled snow. I wore out a snowshovel. Every winter I had to buy a new one. Because back in Cleveland there, snow was every day, every day, every day, all winter long.

PHILLIPS: Is there anything else that you'd like to say before we finish?

HORVATH: Well, all I can say is I'm happy to be here. We went back to Europe for our sixtieth, for our fiftieth wedding anniversary, and there hasn't much improvement in those countries. We still saw oxen working the fields and, uh, so we're just happy to be

here.

PHILLIPS: Okay. That finishes interview number 400 [DP-26] with Verna Horvath and her husband, who we heard in the background also, Louis. It is now about 12:35 and, uh, that wraps it up.