EI-1372
ORYSIA GALADZA HLADIO
BIRTHDATE: MARCH 28, 1937
INTERVIEW DATE: JANUARY 10, 2005
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 68
RUNNING TIME: 02:19:05
INTERVIEWER: KEVIN DALEY
RECORDING ENGINEER: KEVIN DALEY
INTERVIEW LOCATION: AMBRIDGE, PENNSYLVANIA
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

UKRAINE, 1949
AGE: 12

SHIP: GENERAL MUIR
PORT: BREMENHAFEN, [PH] GERMANY
RESIDENCES:

DALEY: Good afternoon. This is Kevin Daley for the Ellis Island Oral History Program. Today is January 10, 2005. I'm in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, which is just north of Pittsburgh, with Orysia Galadza Hladio, who came to the United States from the Ukraine in 1949 at the age of 12 and a half as a displaced person with her family. So thank you very much for letting me interview you in your very special story, coming to the United States under those circumstances. So can I just get you to spell your name now? Your first and last name?

HLADIO: Orysia—O-R-Y-S-I-A—Galadza—G-A-L-A-D-Z-A—Hladio—H-L-A-D-I-O.

DALEY: And is Galadza—Galadza your maiden name?

HLADIO: Yes.

DALEY: And where in the Ukraine were you born?

HLADIO: I was born in 1937 in Western Ukraine in a small village of Bilokernycia. It is near Ternopil. The village had no running water, no electricity, had some thatched roofs, mud streets. Spring—water was from the spring. And my—my father was a carp—the village carpenter, the village secretary, the village cantor. My mother was a housewife who took care of the growing of the wheat and killing the pigs. And it was a society—well, much self-contained.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: You know, the village was self-contained.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: Yes?

DALEY: Yeah, we'll get to that eventually.

HLADIO: Oh, okay.

DALEY: I just wanted to get some basic facts first.

HLADIO: Okay, okay.

DALEY: What was the date of your birth?

HLADIO: March 28, 1937.

DALEY: And can you give me the name of your mother and father?

HLADIO: My father—my father was Michael Mychaylo Galadza. My mother was Theodozia Galadza.

DALEY: Okay. Oh, just to go back. Can you spell the name of the town?

HLADIO: Okay. Bilokernycia—B-I-L-O-K-E-R-N-Y-C-I-A.

DALEY: And that second area that you mentioned?

HLADIO: It was in a region of Ternopil—T-E-R-N-O-P-I-L.

DALEY: Okay. And going back to your father's name, his name was?

HLADIO: Mychaylo—Michael—Mychaylo Galadza.

DALEY: Can you spell Mychaylo, please?

HLADIO: Mychaylo—M-Y-C-H-A-Y-L-O.

DALEY: And your mother's name?

HLADIO: Theodozia—T-H-E-O-D-O-Z-I-A.

DALEY: And her maiden name?

HLADIO: Nych—N-Y-C-H.

DALEY: Can you describe your father for me physically?

HLADIO: He was medium built, active, prob—in earlier years, probably weighed less than average. He was about five, eight or so, dark hair. What else?

DALEY: And can you describe his personality?

HLADIO: Yes, he—he used to tell us you have to tell truth to the eye, Pravda orchi [PH], a very righteous man, loved reading, loved—from—from his earliest times, he said when he would have a few pennies or kopeka [PH] he would save to get a book, if he could go to the larger town. And there were only three grades in our village so the priest had—or the teachers had told my grandparents that my father was bright, that he should go to school in the next town. But my grandfather said, "You can't get bread from a book." But my father had a lon—lifelong love of reading and learning and probably was adventuresome, because from the—I remember anytime he would be leaving our house my mother would say, "Where are you going?" He said, "Into the world." [unclear], into the world. It was always that. Our village was probably no more than a couple miles either way, at the most, and he was going [unclear]. That was before anybody even thought of going anywhere.

DALEY: So would you describe him as a positive person, a positive personality?

HLADIO: Yes, he had total faith in God's providence. He would—he and my mother both would say, "God's providence will provide," No matter how tough the times were, they did not complain. And so I—I would think so. He—he also [chuckles] did not have patience with petty things. He would just—just—he wouldn't—what was right, what was right and that's that. He'd say it once. And so—he—he was an artist, actually. Those frames that we have, he made all of those. He was very patient with making things perfect. But he was impatient with people who did dumb things or stupid things. He just—you know, he would say, "That's not right." And he was not afraid to say so, although he was very much afraid of authority.

DALEY: And what about your mother? Can you describe her physically?

HLADIO: Yes, she was, oh, maybe about five, four, black hair, very pretty. She was probably the belle of the ball. She sang for all the weddings when she was young. And she never met a stranger. She—everyone was her friend, no matter whether we were in Germany or when we came to Texas. They—she was just very, very positive, I think in some ways almost too trusting, trusted everyone. And she and my father both welcomed people into their homes, or home. We only had one room in our—in our house but there were always people coming in, the same thing, misplaced persons camps. And both of them, she went to church daily. She prayed for a priest. She got for—one of her chil—sons to be a priest. And two of them are and a grandson also. But she—she—very—they were very pious people. Their faith in God probably got them through all those difficult times.

DALEY: So how would you describe the atmosphere growing up in your home?

HLADIO: The village was my playground. I—my village was defined by, my Aunt Cheketrana [PH] lived over there, my Bubba [PH] lived over there, my [unclear] lived there. It was—the village was my playground. I could—I don't ever remember being afraid out there. You know, there was a creek and just—I can—I could draw a map of our village based on where my—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: —relatives' houses were, played with my cousins, played—I didn't go to school there yet because when—it was stopped during the war. And anyway, I was only seven and a half when we left our village. But I—even though it was a tough time, it was a happy time.

DALEY: And the family life was very warm and—was it—

HLADIO: Yeah, every—well, [chuckles] our whole—I wasn't afraid. I wasn't afraid, even though the—I—it—I don't know how our parents were able to protect us from some of the—from some of the terrible things that were going on. I really—I don't know. It's an art—I—you know, as a parent now, I think, 'How did they do all that?' Because I felt protected.

DALEY: Okay. I just want to pause the tape for one second. [tape off/on] We're continuing now. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

HLADIO: Well, my sister was five years older. Then we had a—my parents had a son after that and he died, like, two, three weeks. Then I was born in '37. My sister was born in '32; I was born in '37. And after me, there was a baby boy that died. And then my brother, Roman, was born in '43. So

while—when we were in Ukraine, there were my parents and three children.

DALEY: Can you give me the names of all the children?

HLADIO: Olga—Olga (Olla [PH], we call her), and then Roman. He's six years younger than I am. And in Germany, my parents had my sister. In 1946, they had a daughter, Irene, and in 1952, had a—in America, had brother, Paul and '55, a brother, Peter. So they were the two American citizens.

DALEY: Did you have a l—you had a large extended family—

HLADIO: In Ukraine?

DALEY: In the Ukraine?

HLADIO: Oh, yes. My father was one of seven; so was my mother. So we had cousins, aunts, uncles, you know.

DALEY: Do you remember your grandparents?

HLADIO: My—my father's mother—my father's father died a few weeks before I was born but my father's mother, Anna, lived—we lived with her; she lived with us. And then my mother's parents, Nester [PH] and Maria Nych, he died in '42. And I remember when my mother's sister came to say that he died and they had to go and prepare him for the [unclear]. And my grandmother, my mother's mother, Maria, lived till—into the '60s. She was early 90s when she died. So I remember them, yes.

DALEY: And for your father's mother, do you remember her maiden name?

HLADIO: Yeah, I think it's—I think it was Roberta [PH]. I have it written down upstairs but I think Roberta. And she was Polish. So our village, since it was near the Polish border, some of the people were Polish and some of them Ukrainian. So when a girl married, if she was Polish then—the—the girls were Polish, they got married in Polish church. The girls would be Polish and the sons—the daughters would be Polish and the sons would be Ukrainian. So that was the case in my father's family. So his sisters are Polish and, after the war, they were actually sent re—to the resettled gr—or resettled lands of western area of Poland, the reclaimed lands from Germany. So I have cousins that are Polish and cousins are Ukrainian.

DALEY: So it sounds like the Ukrainians and the Poles got together—

HLADIO: In our—

DALEY: —well?

HLADIO: In our village they got—yes, they did. There was not—you know, it was—it—it was a peaceful coexistence. There was a Polish church, a Ukrainian church and they celebrated both holidays.

DALEY: Is it the same religion for the Ukrainians?

HLADIO: Catholic. Well, Ukrainian Catholics. Yes, we're Catholic and, because there are also orthodox in Western Ukraine, but our village happened to be most of the—I guess most of the people were Catholic, [unclear] Catholic. Yeah, the Ukrainian Catholics and the Ukrainian—and then there were Ukrainian Orthodox. And of course, now there are other denominations.

DALEY: How would the Ukrainian Catholics differ from Roman Catholics?

HLADIO: Customs. Our customs are perhaps identical to the Orthodox Ukrainians and even to the Orthodox Serbians. But we're under the pope. And in—at one point, the Catholic Church had two centers, Rome and Constantinople. And so when Constantinople, when they were together and then when Constantinople, the church politics kind of things united, or broke, or united with Rome, then it—initially, there were two centers. Then the western part came under the pope and the eastern part stayed under Constantinople or orthodox. And that's—it's—church—my brothers know more about that than I do. I just know that our—the Western Ukraine is under the pope. Ukrainian Catholics are under the pope, although they still in some circles are considered to be second-class [chuckles] Catholics. But the Catholic Church has 14—around 14 rites. You know, 14 different customs. Mel [unclear]—Danny Thomas was Catholic but he was of a different rite. And so that—that's the difference between—you know, but we're—we're under the pope and orthodox are not.

DALEY: And the Polish Catholics, they would be Roman Catholic also?

HLADIO: Yeah, they would be but they're also some—oh, yes. They were—in our village, they were Roman Catholics, yes.

DALEY: Yeah. Well, I wanted to ask about what ha—what went on in the village. Was it a farming village?

HLADIO: Yes, it was—I think they only went out—went—my mother—once in a while, she would go to the nearest—near big city, which is Lviv [PH], take eggs and meat and whatever. And she would bring babushkas or

material. I think they got—sa—salt was—there was a cooperative in the village that people got things like salt or things that they couldn't make themselves. But otherwise, it was a self-contained village. It was a farming village. But every once in a while my mother would go to the big city and stay—take the train and stay overnight and bring, you know, things that she—they could not grow. And life was—they had weddings and holy days and—it was an—actually a—I think in some ways a joyful time, lots of singing, lots of evening activities, and on weekends, I imagine, and, like, the weddings lasted for several days. And it was—it was a simple life but a life—people made their own joy. And I remember, you know, they—there was no radio, no electricity, so they would use nafta [PH], kerosene, nafta for light, candles. In fact, we would—every Christmas, I tell my children—my sister and I both marvel. They would have the Ukrainian custom of having straw on a—you know, it was just dirt—straw on ground. And our father would have a Christmas tree. And it would be decorated with those candles—you know, candles. And we said, "How did we not burn down?" But it was—that's just how it was. You know, because the room had a dirt floor and so the straw was nice. We kids would play in it.

DALEY: And can you describe your house, what it looked like?

HLADIO: Yes. Well, there were—my father built it. It was two rooms. There was a larger room and a center hall from front to back and a smaller room. We—when I was born, we lived—I was born in a larger room and it probably wasn't more than 15 by 18, at the most. And then the center hall, and then my grandmother lived in—in a room—smaller room across the way. And there was a window—two windows facing the front, two windows facing the back and one win—the side, and one window facing the back where the pigsty was and the stable and, you know—and—to the gardens. And it was made of clay, strong clay. And my father—and there was an attic, and my father put a tin roof on it. He was one of the few [chuckles] at that time. That was a modern house because it had a tin roof. And he made a porch with beautiful, like, cutouts, you know. And—on it and there was steps going up. And it was—and it was in the center of the village. By those standards, it was a modern house. It was lar—large enough and it was—and we had our beds on either side of the room. And we had a table in the middle in—in—bench, and then, of course, a stove that was just iron—flat iron thing on a—on a clay kind of top. And my mother would put in wood or straw underneath to—to cook. And there was a—it's called a pitch for baking bread. It was made out of clay, kind of tall and—and you'd have to heat it up and then put the bread in and bake it. And you had to watch it. None of the modern stuff about, you know, timers and all. But Mother made some good bread and I guess all the ladies did. That was—really was the staff of life. [unclear] bread all the time.

DALEY: So, basically, everything happened in that one room?

HLADIO: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Uh-huh. It was—and people came. I mean, they had christenings. They had had weddings. They have—I remember my—the younger brother, the baby brother that died, he was laid out right there in a catafalque. You know, right—so people didn't allow the lack of space to stop their activities with others.

DALEY: And what was your father's occupation?

HLADIO: He was a carpenter. He had gone—when he was 18, he went to Poland. I think he said Levanich [PH]. It was a trade, a carpentry store. And he was actually there three—for three years. And so he had papers that—he was a carpenter. In fact, when he was done he had—they—he was asked to stay on to be a teacher. But he was homesick. His mother—you know, he was oldest at that time at home and so he felt duty bound to come home.

DALEY: And you said your—your mother had the typical duties at home. But she also went outside of the home?

HLADIO: Well, the out—the duties of the home meant taking care of the land, of pigs. Now, my father had no interest in doing the farming things. But it was a barter system and he would, not completely—some things he got paid for for doing. But if he'd go and build a home and he might get some money, but he might get where they would take the horses and come and help my mother with the fields, with [unclear] a pig. And then my mother had two brothers that—who would come and help her with that. And my mother actually enjoyed being in charge and doing all that. She had—you know, my father couldn't kill a fly. And my mother would kill a chicken, kill a pig and, you know, deliver calves. She had no—no problems with that. You know, she—she enjoyed that. So it was sort of—they were well matched. And by—by Ukrainian standards of 1931—that was the year they were married, they were both old to get married because my mother was 20 and my father was 27. And he said the only reason he got married was because his parents told him to go get married, he said. And his young friends didn't want him because they were single and he—you know, he was competition. And the older guys were married and they didn't want a single guy around. So he had no choice. And so he—and so when they told him—they said, "Well, who am I going to find?" They said, "Well, Nesta [PH] Nych has Doyska [PH]. My mother—they called her Doyska—Theodozia. My father said he kind of—she was always in plays because she would be organizing plays and—and she was in plays and she sang. And she was just brave. You know, gutsy lady, gutsy girl. And so my father was very happy when his

parents told him to go and, you know, [unclear], that, you know, go ask for the hand of marriage and, you know, to—her—and so they were—they were well matched, you know. Yeah, my father was—some ways, he was outspoken, yet he was shy in some way. It was—you know, was—she—but he enjoyed that she—that she—her personality. She loved dancing. He didn't but he said, you know, she can go dancing. She'd go dance.

DALEY: They complemented one another.

HLADIO: Yes, yeah. They really—when the six of us, you know, brothers and sisters, talk about our parents, we say, "They really—they pulled it off somehow." We don't know how but they pull—you know, they—they were just straight arrow and what was right, what was right. Righteous—you know, they were just good people.

DALEY: And in terms of religion, how—did you observe Sunday mass every—every—

HLADIO: Well, my—

DALEY: —week?

HLADIO: My father was a cantor so, of course, he went to—to vespers on Saturdays and any Ukrainian Catholics, [unclear] Catholics, Serbians, orthodox have a whole lot of services, not just Sunday mass. You know, there was all kinds of services. And of course, my father went to all of them and my mother—probably most of them—I—I even remember there was a mid-Lent. There was a Wednesday. They call it plocani [PH] where you bow down. You—you know, you go—you pray a little bit and bow down to the ground, pray a little bit—you know, as you see priests sometimes go down. It's like 300-some times. [unclear]. And they don't do that here anymore. [chuckles] It's called plocani [PH], bowing. And I remember being there and falling asleep. And of course, our churches didn't have benches. There would just be about two or three skinny ones just for the very elderly. So you stood. When you went—you had—church was a—a central part of the village activities, not just our family but also the village activities.

DALEY: Was it like a Russian Orthodox service? Was there a lot of singing and a lot of incense?

HLADIO: Yes. And—and actually, you could probably—it—it—the same. You know, it'd be—the services would be the same. We're just under the pope and—and Russian Orthodox are not. They have a patriarch or a metropolitan.

DALEY: Hmm. Did they allow you to touch the host, the—the bread to eat?

HLADIO: Oh, well, no. You get it by spoon. Yeah, by spoon with wine. Yeah. No, we don't—we still—it's still that—it's still that way.

DALEY: So you would attend church once a week or would there be—

HLADIO: It depended. We—we had a lot of holidays. If it was a holiday, if it was St. Peter and Paul you went to church. If it was St. John the Baptist you went to church. And—and whatever they were, and since it was a farming community, people would leave work and go to church. And of course, the bells rang and, you know.

DALEY: Oh, I wanted to ask also, what is a cantor? Can you describe what a cantor does?

HLADIO: Cantor? A cantor assists the priest. For instance, the priest says—oh, there are all kinds of prayers that the ordinary people may not know. The priest may say, "Lord have mercy," and, you know, "Lord, bless us," something. And people say, "Lord have mercy." But there are also all kinds of prayers, additional prayers, that, even if there is no one in church, which seldom is so, the cantor—the cantor is almost like the choir director. And the cantor also helps the priest get dressed and anything, and holds the—the incense, what do you call—cadello [PH] and—he's—it's—you learn to be a cantor also. In fact, it's harder to—in today's times it's harder to find a cantor than it is a priest, because not too many people have that training.

DALEY: And so it must have been a important position in the community to be a cantor.

HLADIO: I would think so. I think it was respected. It was respected.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: Did they have altar boys too?

HLADIO: You know what? I don't remember. I don't remember if they did or not.

DALEY: And—

HLADIO: I know we do now but I just don't remember.

DALEY: And during the service, to explain the church, was there a lot of pictures and sculptures, pictures of saints, paintings of saints?

HLADIO: Well, of course. There are—

DALEY: Statues?

HLADIO: Orthodox Church and a Ukrainian Catholic Church have icons everywhere. Some of them have more than others. But on some of them there are icons everywhere. You know, those kind. And there are not statues, Ukrainian—Eastern Ukrainians don't have statues in their church but there are icons all over of saints. I mean, you could—and people who couldn't read could meditate on saints, on these beautiful icons of saints, pray—pray—you know, it would help them feel spiritual and connected.

DALEY: Did—did they have the Stations of the Cross?

HLADIO: Not in the Ukraine. And that's actually a Latin—we have them now in our church, as it's sort of Latinized. But we didn't at that time. We had special services. It was called pre-sanctified liturgy for—during Lent.

DALEY: And did you have confession?

HLADIO: Yes.

DALEY: Would it be one on one or—

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: —would it be a group?

HLADIO: No, no. It was one on one, just like it was in olden times in Latin. Right. Yeah, one on one.

DALEY: How long would a service last?

HLADIO: A Sunday liturgy, at least two hours. Vespers before that or vespers after or some other kind of things, a service could last—Easter service could last four or five hours with all the things. In fact, two years ago we went to my brother's church in Frampton [PH] in Canada. He's a Ukrainian Catholic married priest. We went for Easter, all six of us, the brothers and sisters. We—service started at five. And by the time the baskets were blessed and everything was over, it was 11 o'clock. Yeah. And it didn't seem that long because there was all the singing, all the activity and it's not like you have to come and sit. People came and went, you know, kind of—and the beautiful melodies and—but, yeah, they can last a very

long time. [unclear] Orthodox as well as Ukrainian, you know, Byzantine. Yeah.

DALEY: You mentioned the priest is married?

HLADIO: Ukrainian Catholic priests historically have been allowed to marry. When they started coming to America they were married. This was ear—early 1900s. But they were und—in Canada—but they were under the jurisdiction of Latin-rite bishops, who did not seem to be familiar with Ukrainian rite and custom. And so they forbade the Ukrainian Catholic married clergy to have liturgy. See, you can't be Catholic; you're married. And so many of them—most of them said, "We need to serve our people." And so they just were not—they were ac—they were—they became orthodox by virtue of not being allowed to celebrate their liturgies. And so many, many, if not most of the orthodox in Canada and America may have their roots in—in being denied to practice their Catholic faith because they're married clergy. So at some point around maybe late '20s, the bishops in Ukraine told the seminarians that if they were planning—if they wanted to come to America, they could not be married. And they had to be married prior to ordination, prior to becoming a deacon. And if their wife dies, they could not remarry. So I have two brothers that are Ukrainian Catholic priests and married with children.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

HLADIO: In fact, my brother, Peter—did—you probably didn't watch when the pope was in Ukraine at all? No?

DALEY: No, [unclear].

HLADIO: No. Well, anyway, my brother was one of the commentators from here, from EWTN. He has a Ph.D. in books and all that stuff. But that's—but anyway, Ukraine—the United States is finally allowing, bit by bit, married Ukrainian can—you know, married candidates for the priesthood in Ukrainian Catholic church.

DALEY: And would a typical Sunday service—

HLADIO: Uh-huh.

DALEY: —in the Ukrainian church, would that be like either the present or the old Roman Catholic ceremony we had here?

HLADIO: It never was Roman Catholic. It—what—what's known, our church here, on Saturday evening should be vespers. But we have Ukrainian liturgy but in English. Sunday morning, it's in old Slavonic at eight o'clock. It lasts maybe an hour and a quarter, which is not the two hours it used to when we came to Ambridge. And then 11 o'clock English to—to help people, and most people in this area do not speak Ukrainian in our church and, plus, intermarry. So—and we don't have the vespers. We do have sanctified—you know, we have combination of things, I guess, to meet the people's needs, combination of services. But none of them are over two hours long. [chuckles] No, no, no.

DALEY: But the fact—back in the Ukraine, though, when you attended church, what was the ceremony like? How did it—what kind of things happened during the ceremony?

HLADIO: Well, let's say that liturgy—see, you go—liturgy and people stand. And there's lots of, you know, the—the incense, the bells, the kneeling, the standing, the—well, singing, of course, beautiful singing, beautiful singing. The—the time goes more quickly than you think because of the singing. And it lasts—a liturgy in Ukraine probably lasts about two, two and a half hours, the standing.

DALEY: Did the priest give a sermon?

HLADIO: Oh, they give sermons and then communion and, oh, yeah. Yeah, they did.

DALEY: I want to also ask about whether there were any Jewish people in your town.

HLADIO: Not in our village. My father said that when he was young—he must have been about 10 because he was born in 1903—there was a Jewish family. And my father used to go to their house and he and the young boy would read, you know, together, study together. But they left before he—[unclear] say, they left before World War I. And our—and so there was no one. Our village was very poor. There was not—you know, the only store was a cooperative. Now, apparently in the next town, a larger town—it was a business town—they were—there was a Jewish community.

DALEY: And did the Jewish people and the Catholic people get along together?

HLADIO: Well, we didn't—my father, he—every—when we came to America, my father would look in every—[chuckles] when we—I have relatives in Chicago and Canada and New York. He would look in the phone book to look for his friends, to see if—if his friend was there. But in our village, I

had never—never been outside of our village, except to go to a miracle place about, I don't know, 10 kilometers away. I had never been out of our village, not to the next town or any. And there were no Jewish people, you know, so I—if there was contact, it had to have been in the larger towns but not—not in our village.

DALEY: Would you hear anything from the larger towns about any—how the Catholics and the Jews would get together?

HLADIO: No, the only thing I remember—and that was when war—and I don't know. My sister thought maybe it was '43—maybe '43. It was a spring day and our—the way our—see, our village was sort of in a valley. And so what I—[unclear] picture—what I remember—now, our village was in a valley here. So—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: If you were up on the road you really couldn't see. I remember standing on our front, well, porch but it really wasn't a porch with someone going through town and they're saying, "They're killing Jews over there." Now, I couldn't—I didn't know. And it was—it was like, "I have no idea." And for me, that was the end of the world, you know. But I had no idea. I just know it was a real still day. It was so very still and cloudy. And it was—and I didn't know what they were talking about, you know. I just—they were—and apparently, it was they had brought Jewish people somewhere, wherever—however far it was. And I guess they had them dig ditches and then they killed them and, you know—but—but it wasn't anywhere that I knew. I just remember feeling really scared. You know, I had no idea what was going on. But—but there were no Jewish in our village.

DALEY: Getting back to family life, do you remember what your typical meals were, what they consisted of?

HLADIO: Lots of potatoes. I mean, we didn't have breakfast or lunch or dinner. Potatoes, sauerkraut, beets, pierogies, beet soup. Let's see. Buckwheat. Loved buckwheat. Once in a while we'd have chicken. But it was—and, like—and my mother would make—I guess it would be called yogurt. It was called [unclear]. You know, sour milk. But it would be so thick that she'd cook potatoes and put these—this nice, cold, like yogurt sliced up on top. It was the best. We would pick some kind of weeds and it was like spinach. But—and that was—it could be served morning—really, I don't remember lunches. Maybe we ate—I don't—you know, I don't know, soups. She would make soup and she would make bread. You know, a piece of bread or, like, from a pig. It would be scroki [PH], which meant, like, bacon bits. You'd fry up all of that and then just let it be. And

then it became like a spread, with rye bread, oh! You know, and it was—so that was—and there was no distinction between breakfast foods or any food. Foods were foods. You know, oatmeal. So that was—you know.

DALEY: And how did you celebrate Christmas? Was Christmas more important than Easter or the other way around?

HLADIO You know, I don't know because we had Black Fast, which meant no dairy products on Christmas Eve. But we also had fast all of lent. I would—Christmas was—we would have 12 dishes, meatless dishes for the 12 apostles. And Easter, what was fast—most of lent. In some ways, it seemed to me that Easter was more celebrated more festively, part of it because it was spring too. And, you know, after not eating meat or eggs or any of that, oh—but—but—no, I can't say. I—they might have been equal because at Christmas time we would sing carols. And then after Christmas we'd go all over—all over town. Everybody sang—would go to everybody's house and sing carols. They'd be dressed up like animals and with stars. You know, it didn't matter that it was cold and freezing. And—but at Easter, I don't—in some ways, they were celebrated equally but in a different way. You know, in a different way.

DALEY: And taking Christmas, what happened on Christmas Eve?

HLADIO: Well, we would have the 12—the 12 dishes. And it would be—and they'd have straw—they had straw under the table here a little bit for the manger, and eat and then I think they had vespers after that. I don't think—there—I don't remember midnight mass. But then I was little so I don't know. I'd have to ask. And then, of course, the next day there would be singing. There were no gifts. We'd go out. We'd get a little gift on St. Nicholas Day, December 6th. Might be, you know, a book, a pencil or some nuts and or—no, I'd never—didn't see oranges. But it wasn't the gift giving. It was the spiritual kind of a thing. And then after that it was just lots of singing, visiting. In fact, my—my aunt, my mother's sister married a Dovdoskia [PH], you know, Polish man. So he would come in his sleigh with horses and take us to their house. And so she would have special, like, poppy seed rolls and—and we would be with them. Yeah, that—and—and then I don't remember them coming to our house. Maybe they did for our Christmas because, you know, were two different Christmas. But it was just a joyous time.

DALEY: Oh, they—they worked on a different calendar?

HLADIO: Well, the Latin rite, you know, is the—the—you know, like ours. Polish would have the 25th and the Ukrainians would have it on the Julian calendar, which is the 7th. You know, so we would have two Christmas. But there weren't gifts.

DALEY: Were the—was the house decorated?

HLADIO: Well, yeah. The straw on the floor, the Christmas tree [chuckles] with candles that my—you know, and also they would have sheaves of wheat in the corner. It was called pangedo [PH] for good luck. And they'd throw nuts into the straw. Let's see. What else? Just the—the special food for Christmas Eve supper was kutcha [PH]. It was honey, buck—not buckwheat—bar—no, honey, wheat, poppy seed and nuts. Any kind of nuts mixed up together. And you had to have that first. And you had pierogies and everything that was—my mother would make buckwheat stuffed cabbage. But they made their own oil, poppy seed oil, you know, that was—it smelled so good, because poppies grew a lot. So they would—there was a place where they would go—miller would make the oil and just smelled good. And of course, if you're hungry, you know, it smells even better. I still—every Christmas Eve I have to make buckwheat for myself. The children—some of the children eat it because it grew in the—in Ukraine.

DALEY: And for the pierogies, did you have cheese and meat?

HLADIO: Well, it was—no, no.

DALEY: [unclear]

HLADIO: Not ever meat. Just potatoes and sauerkraut because cheese would be white. You know, it would be dairy products so we didn't have—so not for Christmas Eve.

DALEY: And you didn't have sour cream then either.

HLADIO: Oh, no.

DALEY: No.

HLADIO: No, no. It was just onions, oil, onions. There was no margarine so everything was fried in oil. Yeah.

DALEY: And what was Easter like? Easter day like? Oh, I'm sorry. Just going back to Christmas, you would have a service on Christmas?

HLADIO: Yeah, we would have—and I—I—and I think there was vespers Christmas Eve and liturgy mass on Christmas Day. And of course, there would be—and then after that, that saint—saint—well, Blessed Virgin Mary—25th is Jesus, 26th is the Holy Family, 27th, St. Stephen. Of course, you have all of those. Those—those were holy days of obligation. And—

and then for New Year's—New Year's Day was a holy day of obligation. It was [unclear] circumcision and—of Jesus and something else. You know, triple holy day. So of course, you went. And lots of caroling, lots of visiting.

DALEY: Was Easter—that was a—always on a Sunday and that was always church.

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: Was there—

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: —a meal? A large meal after that?

HLADIO: Yeah, they—that's when they would have the eggs and the ham and, you know, the—because Holy Thursday there were services, long services. Good Friday, lots of services. Saturday evening there were vespers and whatever. And then Sunday morning, forever, and then blessing the baskets, Easter baskets with Easter food. The kielbasi [PH], the ham, the eggs, the breads. You know. Then—

DALEY: Did they bless the graves? Was that an important part of—

HLADIO: Yeah, they blessed that on—a special day that they bless those. And I think it's—I know it's after Easter. It may be a few weeks after Easter. But they go—yes. Yeah, that's—people go and bless the graves. Uh-huh.

DALEY: In terms of school—oh, one other thing. Which are the other—in the other parts of the year, the important religious holidays, like a saints day?

HLADIO: Well, St. Peter and Paul always was. St. John the Baptist always was. Let's see. Let's see. January—March, the Annunciation. March 25th, Blessed Virgin Mary. March, April, May. June is St. Peter and Paul. April, May, June, July. In August, on August 15th, it's—August 6th is Jesus when he went to heaven, you know, when he—

DALEY: Ascension?

HLADIO: Well, is that Ascension? Yeah. Yeah, yeah. August—something else—and we blessed fruit beginning of August and the middle of August it's Blessed Virgin Mary, her—going into—having, you know, her death. And that's when we bless flowers. Then end of August, it's Beheading the St. John the Baptist. Middle of—let's see—in September there's St.—St.

Anne. October, November—November was St. Michael's and St. Demetrius. Yeah, they—we used—all those holy days used to be holy days of—you know, you had to go. Now, they're very few, you know, that are obligation. But those are all church, you know, holy days. And between—before St. Peter and Paul there was a two-week fast that meant, you know, no meat or—before Beheading St. John the Baptist in August, fast. Advent, fast. Lent, fast. That also meant no dancing, you know, so—you could sing church songs but not—but anyway, there were—there were all these rituals, I think, to help people maybe even entertain themselves in some way. You know, provide some kind of boundaries to—

DALEY: Were any of these holy days events where you would have, like Christmas or Easter, a special meal or a special event in the home?

HLADIO: I—I don't remember. I know that there was a St. John—another St. John's Evonico Paulo [PH]. And it's on the 24th of June where the young people, young—the girls go to the creek or to the river. And they—there's things they do with wax and with bringing [unclear] to find out who their husband or who their wife will be. And that's still celebrated in Ukraine, called Evonico Paulo. They even have songs about that. But I was too young at that time to know. But I know that that's—you know, that—that was celebrated. I can't think about special foods.

DALEY: In terms of education, did you go to school?

HLADIO: I—the school was—I started kindergarten, I think, but because there was war, our—the—our area—we began feeling the effects of the war in 1941. So I was only—I was four years old. The Russians came and then the Germans were coming and the Russians would come. You know, we were sort of the roadway back and forth between Russians and Germans. So school for me—I was too young to start. And then even when it was time to start, there wasn't any school. You know.

DALEY: And outside of the home, what would you do for fun? What kind of games would you play? Did you have toys?

HLADIO: You know, didn't have toys. Didn't have—we made our own. We made our own. We played mud pies. Bugs were—bugs were our cows and horses and we made our own toys. My father made a sled but, of course, that was for winter. Wat—we watched [chuckles]—watched geese, watched cows. I mean, took care of. You know, you went—my sister said she—she took a cow out and I'd go out with her and there really was no—I mean, the fun you made yourself. You have to be creative. But on the other hand, you had chores. You had things to do. Well, be—you know, I imagine even I watched my little brother at times, you know, with

seven—you know, you just—you just become part of the family workforce, really, from—you know, you become responsible quite early.

DALEY: And growing up, did you know anything about America?

HLADIO: No, didn't know anything about anything.

DALEY: Just—

HLADIO: Knew about my own little world.

DALEY: Had anybody from your town ever gone to America?

HLADIO: You know, I—there was one person that, in fact, when we came to America, my parents contacted him. But our village, the land around it was so productive that the people from our area didn't leave, didn't—so I knew no one. No one. And we—and my parents didn't talk about—none of our relatives, not anyone. People were so tied to their land. They still are, you know. But from our area, no one. Didn't know about America, didn't know—didn't know anything except my little village.

DALEY: How separated was your village from other villages? Was it very far?

HLADIO: Well, I know that one of my aunts lived in the next village and we had to ride a wagon to get there. The next larger town that my sister went to school there—she would walk. It was seven kilometers away. And my uncle lived there but I had never gone—gone there and she—she'd walk across fields to go to school when—when we weren't being bombed and when—you know, when things were okay.

DALEY: Oh, and I forgot to ask the name of your church.

HLADIO: In Ukraine?

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: I have no idea. I have no idea. You know, I—

DALEY: Was there just one church in the town?

HLADIO: Well, there was the Ukrainian church. It was a little wooden church and then there was the Polish church nearby, the Latin. You know, they were both Catholic. I have—I have no idea what the names of either one of them were.

DALEY: I wanted to turn—I don't know how much you would know about the larger events in the Ukraine at that time. Did you ever hear anybody talking about the famine?

HLADIO: Not at that time, but my—what—what my earliest memories are of were, you know, when—and my—my—I remember at one point they were talking—someone was talking. I think my parents must have really protected me in some way. Or else they didn't talk to—about bad things in front of us. I remember hearing someone saying that someone went to Lviv, which is the big city and that they're—that they're killing children, young children there and putting them in cans, you know, for meat. And apparently, that was so, you know, that they would, say, take a message there and here they wouldn't find them. And historically, from what I've learned since, apparently there was a [unclear]. I remember that but, otherwise, I don't—the news that we got was—and again, it was—I really—must have been well protected. But from '41 on, the Russians would come and the Germans would come. I could go—we could go to sleep and there'd be Russians in the village. And we—since our house—and you had to put them up. You know, you had to—so we'd have to move into my mother—my grandmother's small room and they would have to live with us. And my mother would have to cook for them. And I could wake up and the Germans are there. And it was like—and that's—and I had never seen a car, never—you know, never saw a radio, none of that. But I saw tanks. I saw airplanes. I saw bombs. And so the news was what came, you know, between the Russians and the Germans, and the Russians and Germans. And—but I don't remember anything about the larger world. I just knew that there was a war and, of course, we were experiencing it.

DALEY: But did Stalin's forced collectivization—did that affect your area of the Ukraine?

HLADIO: It was beginning to take effect. My father talked about that. He was the village secretary and so they—the communists came. And what you had to do is, said, every family had to sign how much land they had. And by the size of their land, they were taxed. Like, for instance, if you had, whatever, an acre, they would say you had to grow so much wheat and give us so much of it back. So they were taxed on the productivity of the land, even though there might have been hail or flooding or whatever, so that kind of a thing. I remember my father talking about—but we really—I'm not even sure that—I mean, there was famine. My parents have pictures or, you know, very—and I think I gave all of those—I may have given them to my brother, maybe not. But I'm not sure that at that time even Ukraine knew the extent of the famine. And it was a—you know, it was an artificial famine. I'm not—if the world knew, they kept it a secret. But I'm not even sure that anyone was aware how horrific that was.

DALEY: Well, in your research, did you find out—did the famine affect people in the eastern part of the country more than the western? Was it a regional thing?

HLADIO: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I think—well, because the eastern part was more—I won't say Russian but more—it was closer to Russia as far as even—even the proximity. You know, that—that there were west—we still had a—some contact with Poland and maybe there were goods that were coming that—and I don't think the western part was as collectivized, however, you know, as—as the eastern parts. So there was more private people—you know, people growing things more privately than—than the collective kind of a thing.

DALEY: Uh-hmm. But there was a spirit of Ukrainian nationalism?

HLADIO: In—in—I—I think there was. And—but I—in some ways, I think it was tempered because there were many Polish—you know, about half of our village, at least, was Polish. But I remember one night it was—again, we blew out the candles and put sheets in the windows and they said, "[speaking in foreign language]." You know, "Partisans are coming to the village." And, you know, whoever was coming. You didn't know who they were. Were they Russian? Were they German? Were they Polish? Were they Ukrainian? And if they thought that you were an ally to any one of them, they'd get you, you know. So—but I remember—and it was a real—because I really—in looking back, I think my parents really did a tremendous job in protecting their children from—from being afraid in spite of—you know, if the bombs are falling, I'm going to be afraid. They can't protect me from that, but from hearing and see—like, turning my head or something. I mean, throughout the war, I never saw a dead person. If I did, I don't know. You know, we were—in some ways, my parents were protective in that way. And it did—they didn't seem to talk about terrible events within our earshot.

DALEY: Uh-hmm. It seems that they had to walk a very fine tightrope to survive.

HLADIO: Yeah. Well, I think everyone there did. And I think in—the most wonderful thing in America is to be free and not be afraid. I mean, because they really did not know—you know, the—when the Russians were in they work on having people say—tell them that you went to church, or you did this or you did that or—you know, and so, you know, spy on you, basically. They used neighbors. So—but we—you know, I—when I look back, I think, "Wow. How did our parents—my parents do all that?" You know, we—and it got—in 1941, the Russians came and my father's sister was Polish and they had a little bit of land. In the middle of the night they came and took her and her husband and two children to

Siberia. So he died. And after the war they were sent—my aunt and two children were sent to Western Poland. Now, my father's two other sisters were also. And then in—I think maybe in '43 my father's youngest brother, Nicholai [PH], was 18 and the Germans took him. And we don't know what happened to him. See, whoever came, they would take the young people, you know, to do whatever. And sometimes you heard from them; sometimes you didn't. And in '40—1943—I mean, '44, rather, spring of '44 it was really bad. I mean, the front was a few miles away. And the planes were, you know, bombing and, I mean, one time dropped a hundred—a hundred bombs in the village. You know, they could count the holes, killed one horse and one child. And it just got bad. And so my father said—my father and two other families said, "We have to leave to go west a little bit." And we had—my father's brother had went to Poland and a priest had to—or at least headed that way. And so they said, you know, "We'll leave for two weeks till the front is over." Because—and so in July of '44, July 21st of 1944, the three wagons—two wagons? No, three—we left, oh, in the middle of the night, didn't say goodbye to relatives because my father said, "If you stop to say goodbye they won't let you go." So we left. And once we left our village, we're out on the main road above the village. There were—there were tanks and—and Jeeps and cows and—you know, because the cow followed us, sheep followed us and then, of course, the horses. And so once we got there—and it was raining, raining just bad. We were a mass of humanity heading west, escaping the bombings but really not knowing where we were going. And so we started out west and we got—a certain point, they told us we couldn't go towards Poland. So we had to go south towards—toward the Carpatha [PH] Mountains. And so we went that way. And once we crossed the border, Czechoslovakia, there—there was a huge field. And they took—well, the horses. It took probably about a month with the horses and cows and things, you know, and begging for food and all. And once we crossed the border there was a train station and a big field. They took the—put all of us in boxcars. The horses and all the—you know, all the other animals and wagons stayed behind. And so we spent—we'd go, you know, back and forth through much of south—southeastern Europe, through Czechoslovakia, through a little bit Croatia or Hungary and up into Budapest and then Vienna and then Berlin, and from Berlin to—

DALEY: Okay. I'd like to pause the tape here—

HLADIO: Sure.

DALEY: —because we have to switch and we'll—

HLADIO: Okay.

DALEY: —continue on a new tape.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A]

DALEY: We're beginning the second tape of the interview with Orysia Galadza Hladio. You were talking about leaving your town. Now, do you remember which army controlled your town when you left it?

HLADIO: Yeah, when we left, the Germans were controlling. They were—they were going back. They were leaving the area and going back toward west. They were—they were still—but the fighting was still several miles away from us on—the front. The front was right there. So we—we got new wagons because were afraid of Russia, afraid of Germany, really not knowing where they're going. But the—the bombs were coming down into our village so we thought we'd get out of the front. So we left, my father said, for two weeks because we—all we took was what we had. He dug a hole and put our—our pedano [PH], which is a down, you know, feather ticks and pillows and things in the ground, things that they thought they were important, dug them up and covered them up and just took the basic necessities that they thought would be—for two weeks. And once we left the village we found ourselves as—in a mass of humanity—you know, bit by bit, the—there were—giant traffic jam going and you had to go where you were told to go. So we'd stop for the night wherever the wagon stopped and sleep under the wagon, in a wagon or—and then beg for food from people who had no food themselves. We crossed the Carpatha Mountains and, once we crossed that we were in—into Slovakia. And then there—there the people were put in big, large field. And that's when I tasted my first ice cream cone. So a priest bought me an ice cream cone what—wherever it was. And so we were in boxcars and they—we spent—and the train would go. And then the train station ahead might be bombed. So it'd go back and go another way and another way. So we covered Czechoslovakia, a little bit of Croatia because my parents didn't—my father had trouble understanding, and then Czechoslovakia, then Budapest, Vien—Vienna. Then up to Berlin. And twice during that time the train stopped and put us in lagers, like camp—lager, I guess, where there were barracks. And they took our clothes. They—and the women went—we went through showers. When—men went through one and they shaved their heads and women to another, just the de—and then after they'd de-lice us, you know, they would put these powered things. I remember they would go pshh, pshh! You know, this—those things. I guess it's DDT, now that I know. But so—because we were lice-infested people, slept in—and then—

DALEY: Would—

HLADIO: —back in a—

DALEY: Were these the Germans that were doing this to you?

HLADIO: Oh, yes. Well, we were in—yeah, we were—we were in a German area by then.

DALEY: Oh.

HLADIO: And in Berlin, I remember we were in Berlin. And of course, the air raids, and it was—attack was imminent, it would go like a siren, ooh, ooh, ooh. You know, when it was close it was three long ones. When it was all clear it was one long. And I remember we were in Berlin under—I don't know. It looked like a whole bunch of balloons or dirig—it was something, you know, hanging. It was a cloudy day. And there was an—an air raid. And then after that, then we moved on. And in Berlin, someone from western—from around Nienburg came. Business people came and they would count off families and take them. And so they took my father, and I think there were about eight families, and took us to—outside of Nienburg. Not Nuremberg but Nienburg. It was in northern—

DALEY: Can you spell—

HLADIO: Nienburg? N-I-E-N-B-U-R-G. And there was a lumber factory there. And so my father and mother and sister worked there while the children from the families were—we were out of—out—on the outskirts of town. We were cared for by one woman left from the family. And they would bring us—one time during the day they would bring us a—like a kettle of, I think, soup and a slice of bread. And then another factory—yet another lumber factory on the other side of Nienburg took us—now—now, this was in—we arrived in Nienburg in October of '44—October of '44. And a few months later, another businessman bought these eight families. And we were on the other side of Nienburg. And then probably March, April, it was very, very heavy bombings. And so we spent most of the time in bunkers. And the war ended when we were there. It was in May of '45. And so when the war ended, we were—while we were there—and the Russian—a few, maybe days, weeks—I don't even know when. The Russians came with a bus and said they were taking us back to Russia, to Ukraine—to Ukraine because we were Russian citizens. And my parents really—they knew that if they took us back they'd shoot the men and—you know, because they'd say, "You're spies. Why did you leave?" And the women were washing clothes and they had wet clothes hanging. So they said, "Well, we have wet clothes. We can't go." So they said they'd come the next day. Well, during the time that my parents worked in the lumber factory, one of the people that worked there was a Polish

POW. And so here after the war, different nationalities were starting displaced persons camps. And so this Polish soldier had started a Polish camp, only they didn't know it at the time. But they—after—when the Russians went back that same day, they went to check out the Polish displaced persons camp being organized. And here, the gentleman happened to be there at—the Polish POW. And so he accepted them. So that very day we took whatever we had and went to the Polish camp. And since my father's mother was Polish, that was okay, because each nationality had their own. So we spent from '45 till '48, we spent in Polish camps pretending to be Polish and going to Polish schools. That's when I had my first formal education. And my father wanted to be in the Ukrainian camp but he—the Polish camp we were in was very—it was small and they were good people. I mean, they were all—you know, you lived in barracks. There—the DP camps are abandoned army camps. So when he first started there were so many refugees that a room like this might hold two, three families. And you just had what you had. And in '48, my father was able to get us into the Ukrainian camp, displaced persons camp. And so we were—from '48 to '49 we were in Hanover [PH], which is a fairly large city in northwestern Germany.

DALEY: In—in the Polish camp—

HLADIO: Uh-huh.

DALEY: It started while the war was still going on?

HLADIO: No, immediately after the war.

DALEY: Immediately after.

HLADIO: Immediate—there—no, there was—there were no—and they weren't concentration camps, the ones we were in. They were refugee camps, you know. But it was—as soon as the war was over, there were capable people who organized a place for the—for the refugees. You know, for the homeless people of different nationalities. And many Polish people did go back home. Some did not.

DALEY: And in terms of when you're in your hometown and your father's deciding to get away from the war—

HLADIO: Uh-huh.

DALEY: —how did people decide whether to go east or west?

HLADIO: Well, there were—you—actually, historically, Ukraine has been destroyed by Stalin. You know, their experiences—we had the communists—were

always destructive. I mean, they were very familiar with—everyone, my father with his sister being taken and, you know, they were very familiar with Stalin's deeds and what he does with—you know, with—there were probably more people died in Siberia and by—by communist hands than—than Hitler's hands, even though Hitler was evil. I mean, they were both evil. They were both evil men. We—you know, they didn't—all they wanted people for was to use them, you know, use them for whatever. But—but at least, west just was not as scary going west, from their experience, because commun—you know, they knew of the killings and of people disappearing and of—of—when they would come and try to—for [unclear] them—you know, that—the collective farming and all that stuff. And they would come and they want 100 percent voting and they want, you know—but—so the people, they knew—they knew what east was li—what Stalin was like. It wasn't as bad—it wasn't as bad thinking about what's out west, you know.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: Could have been the same thing because we—when we were going through the showers, I—when I—when I—oh, what was it—late '70s, perhaps, when they were showing the Holocaust on television, the series, and I was in graduate school. And I watched a little bit of it and then I couldn't. I mean, I just cried. And I thought, 'There but for the grace of God go I,' because we went through the showers twice. Had someone—and you—you're so hungry. You want water so much. You know, you want to be clean to—and it's not accessible for you that they say you're going to the showers, if they told us to go to the showers a third time and it was the gas chambers we would have gone because we wouldn't have known. You know, we would have—so it—you know, the humanity, the suffering of humanity in wars—you know, the generals are heroes and poor women, children—I remember my mother was nursing my little brother. My brother was 15 months old when we left. I don't know what she did for diapers. I don't know what, you know, the food. I don't—you know, all—the suffering of people because of wars, you know, for—so it was—for them it was—and in our—our house, I guess, was considered a little better than others so we always had—well, the times that we had German soldiers, we always had—would have a minister, you know, the chaplain staying there. So he would talk with my father, even though it was limited. But my father loved maps so he would show him where the front is and where that is. And they gave us children those little lemon drops that were in papers. But anyway, [chuckles] so it was—west was less scary.

DALEY: Uh-hmm. And when your—when your town changed hands, did a lot of the military-aged men—did—sometimes were they either voluntarily or involuntarily conscripted?

HLADIO: Well, they—they had no choice. In fact, that was probably another reason my father left, because initially they took the young people. You know, young. And then they got a little older and then they got into the 20s, and then got where men would be hiding in barns and—I mean, it got—my father was—in '44, he was—let's see. He was born in 1903, he was—he was 41. My sister remembers—now, I don't but she remembers that he wasn't sleeping home nights. He was sleeping in barns or straw or somewhere because, you know, they would take these men and these men and these men. And they got where they would take anybody and it didn't—

DALEY: And this—

HLADIO: And so my fath—she remembers that he was hi—he wasn't sleeping home. And so she said when we got into the wagon, she was just so happy that we were all together and were going away. She didn't care where. But she was—you know, I don't remember him not sleeping at home but she said he was already hiding, and I imagine many of the men. So it was—didn't matter. Whoever came—

DALEY: Whether it was the Germans or the Russians—

HLADIO: —would—yeah, right.

DALEY: —take—

HLADIO: The younger ones, although it seemed that the Germans weren't—up to a point, maybe, they weren't taking with the Russians. They didn't care. They took—you know, they did for dig—digging ditches or any—you know.

DALEY: Anything.

HLADIO: So—yeah.

DALEY: If somebody refused?

HLADIO: Oh, I imagine there was no refusal. You really probably didn't have a choice, you know.

DALEY: Okay. Let's get back to the camp. Can you describe the Polish camp?

HLADIO: Well, the first one was—I remember we children—they had the anti-aircraft things, you know, and tanks out in—so it must have been army camp. We children played in those. It was fun, you know, and running

through and—it was—it was, I guess, freedom. You know, it was no fear because right at the very end of the war in May we spent so much time in bunkers. And I remember they would have these things flying. And my father said they were barrels. You know, they looked like—it was right before—and then the leaflets, you know, flying from the skies. And just—so it was—the Polish camp was just fun for us kids. You know, I was—I was eight, a little over eight. And then they started schools for us. But we were—they were—that camp that was—then there was some—some—even chalets were made into camps to hold people. You know, to—for transition. So we were in several camps before—smaller camps before they put us in larger camp in Lokum [PH] and there started first grade, made communion. I started first grade when I was eight and a half. But by the time I was, what, 12—no, 11, I think I already finished fifth, because they would just—you'd get the basics and you'd go on—basics and go on. And—

DALEY: Would this be in Polish?

HLADIO: This was Polish camps, yes. They were Polish camps.

DALEY: And speaking—speaking Polish.

HLADIO: Speaking Polish, writing Polish, everything Polish.

DALEY: Was it hard to—for you to make the transition?

HLADIO: You know, I don't even know. I always liked school so it didn't—you know, I can't—hardship was almost something like you accepted. It is like you don't have a choice so you do it. And my father taught me the—and you had to pretend—we pretended we were Polish because we didn't want to be discriminated against. But my father taught me the Ukrainian letters. [chuckles] And then he got me Ukrainian book. And I remember said—asking him to read it to me. He says, "Taught you the letters. You know how to read." [chuckles] And that was that, you know. And then when I was 11 and a half we were able to transfer to Ukrainian camp and that was in 1943, summer of '48. And so didn't start first grade, just went on to the next grade in Ukrainian. And I think that was probably hard. I don't—I don't—it was in Hanover. I—I know it had to have been hard because it was totally different. You know, the language, the—the writing. And so we were [chuckles]—we were there from '48 to '49. Then in '49—

DALEY: Oh, want to pause the tape—

HLADIO: Yeah, sure.

DALEY: —for a second? [tape off/on]

HLADIO: They were—United States, I guess, passed—Truman passed some—a—not law, but allowing about 180 and some thousand refugees to come. And so they were taking applications. Since we didn't have any relative here—if you had relatives, America, you found them and they sent you papers and you could get over. But in 19—yeah, '49—so my parents—someone told them, "Go and sign up." They were taking applications to America. And so my mother went and here [unclear]. Now, by then there were four children. '48, Irene was—no, '49, Irene was three. Roman was six. I was 12. Anyway, there were four children and the—the sponsors really weren't looking for large families. They would prefer having two people with my one child at the most, so signed up and we got called. And so passed the preliminary physical and preliminary that you're not a spy kind of a thing. And they took us to another camp. That camp, the physicals were much more intense and—and the—you know, the spies—"Were you a communist?" "Were you that kind of a thing?" And we passed that.

DALEY: And this was all done by Americans?

HLADIO: I—I suppose because we were in the American zone. I know that it was in the American zone, you know, so we—no, I don't mean Amer—I mean, we were in English zone. I'm sorry. English zone. American zone was south. It was Fren—there was English zone. We were in English zone so fat chance of going to America. You know, usually they were taking Amer—people to America from American zone unless you had a relative. So here we were in English zone and—and so we pass that. So then we went to a third camp and they really checked you over, I mean. And then they put us on a train to go to Bremenhafen to come to wait for a ship to come in. We were in Bremenhafen about two weeks and at—at that point, if they—if a person even had a rash they would not come to America. You know, they would have to wait for the next ship. And I mean, we—and they didn't take families as a whole. They would take the father and then the mother to check them and the children and all. And so probably within two months we were on the way. And in—in Germany, they told us we were going—our sponsor was a—a—someone in Ann Arbor, Michigan. So the ship came and we got on and, of course, it was the Army transporter—hu—transporter. It was huge.

DALEY: Oh, sorry. But before—I just wanted to get a—an idea of what life was in—like either in the Polish or the Ukrainian camp. Was it—did you have enough food? Where were you housed? Were you housed together? Things like that.

HLADIO: The—the displaced persons camps were abandoned army camps. Some in—in Lukom [PH] in the Polish camp was a small—there were probably a hundred families. They were just one-story barracks with rooms. Initially, when there were a whole lot of im—displaced persons, there were two—at least two families in a room. You know. Then as they went to Australia or to Canada as—or—or went back to their home—homeland, it would be one family a room, which was a nice—nice arrangements. The food—there was a common kitchen that we would go and get supplies or foods. They would—I remember the men would get cigarettes, Camels or Phillip Morris and—or—and chocolate, either Nestle's or Hershey's. The children would get chocolates. There would be certain supplies that they would give. I can't say that there was ever enough food but it was better than not having any. You know, the—the UNRA [PH] United Nations would come and, like, to the school.

DALEY: UN—UNRA?

HLADIO: United Nations Relief where you have [unclear]—

DALEY: Oh.

HLADIO: —something Association. We—it was UNRA.

DALEY: Hmm.

HLADIO: UNRA. The people from there would come and check on us. The school was in those—those rounded—

DALEY: Quonset hut?

HLADIO: Uh-huh. And they would have, you know, us here and there. And the only people that would have a book would be the teacher. And we would have—we're lucky to have a book, you know. We would write in our notebooks.

DALEY: And were you treated well?

HLADIO: Well, their—they were run by—even though the overseers were UNRA, you know, United Nations—but they were run by the Polish people or Ukrainian people. And I can't say that I was afraid. And we went to the large—in Hanover, there was a large displaced persons camp, Ukrainian. But it was in buildings where some steps were missing, some windows were missing, some, you know, bombed out places. Hanover was a large city where I—other camps that were in, it was small so they weren't bombed out. So the places were probably as good as could be expected. And I remember also, now that you mention that, was going, you know, to

ruins and people, all kinds of people, going to the ruins and cleaning bricks and collecting pipes. You know, cleaning pipes and taking them to places to sell for a little bit of money.

DALEY: Do you remember the day the war ended?

HLADIO: Mmm, I don't remember the day but I remember the—for all I know, it might have been the day. I remember that, you know, all these—these—you know, the—the barrels were flying. The flyers were flying. The—I don't remember the exact day. I just know we didn't go into the—into the bunkers anymore. The bunkers were, like, sort of snake kind of a thing, you know, with—so that if the bomb hit here it wouldn't hit everybody. It would be—you know, but I don't remember the exact day.

DALEY: And just—

HLADIO: I know it was in May.

DALEY: —to refresh my memory, during the war—

HLADIO: Uh-huh.

DALEY: —the camps were run—who ran the camps?

HLADIO: Well, there were no—no camps for displaced persons. People—it was—perhaps there were some camps for workers. You know, for single workers someplace. But we—I can't say—we didn't live in a camp. We lived in—there were eight families that the person who wanted our parents to work. So they weren't camps.

DALEY: Oh, okay.

HLADIO: They were—not—at least, not for us. Maybe there were places where there were big factories and maybe there were single men or single women—you know, workers that lived in certain places. I don't know but I know from people in Ambridge that have come over that they lived in—on farms with people. They worked on farms. They worked, you know—with us, it was only eight families and lumber area pe—lumber owners built, like, you'd almost call it townhouses of one room. [chuckles] You know, eight one-room things and then it was a toilet out there and there were some ditches that you could hide in. You know, but that was—that—I can't say it was a camp but that the refugee camps weren't started till after the war.

DALEY: Okay, thank you. So you're in—you departed from which city, again?

HLADIO: Bremenhafen. That was the port city in Germany.

DALEY: And what was the name of the boat you came over on?

HLADIO: It was General Muir. And one—when—and we had—we had been on our train to Bremenhafen—I don't know—it seemed to me like all day but I don't think it could have been. And so we were very hungry, all of us. There were—I think it held—the ship held about 3,000 people. So when we went on, women with children were in the captain's—no, I don't know—whoever, but they had a—you know, they had a room with a—with a window. You know, so it would be—my sister and I, we were together but we were like at the end of a ship and a third level down. My father—

DALEY: [unclear]

HLADIO: My father and my brother, six-year-old brother, were in, like, the—the lowest level, I think—fourth level. And since my father was not pushy for comforts, by the time he got there he was on the fourth—you know, there was one, two, three—he was up there. So we're all separated, and that first night, so when we got on the ship we're still steady. And they gave us hot dogs and sauerkraut and whatever to eat and mashed potatoes. And mashed potatoes taste a little like sweet, you know, almost like they may be old. And we're so hungry, we all ate. As soon as the ship started moving, the people—and we were with older women. We were at the end, right—two rooms. One room after us there was where all the bathrooms were and, you know, as soon as the ship started moving, and then [unclear] the English Channel, we started hear—hearing moaning, "I'm gonna die. I'll never see America. I'll"—and I wasn't sick but my sister was sick most of the time, seasick. My father was seasick much of the time. My mother wasn't. My mother and my three-year-old sister were in a nicer room. Now, my brother, Roman, fell off the [chuckles]—off the—

DALEY: Bunk?

HLADIO: —the—the bunk. You know, well, it's like this thing.

DALEY: Oh.

HLADIO: A couple of times. The third time my father tied him with a belt [chuckles] so he wouldn't fall off. And it was—for me, I enjoyed it. You know, I found friends and it was fun. But people who were sick, they were really sick. Now, by the time they got on a boat all their papers were in order. I mean, they had, you know, everything. They had gone through the doctors, through the security, through all of that so they had papers. And so we—anyway, we were supposed to get to New York on the—in eight

days. But the North Atlantic storm was so bad that we—three days were—storm in the ship, as huge as it was, it still—it wouldn't straddle two ways. It would go down and then up and down and up. And so we reached New—New York on October 11th and—

DALEY: [unclear]

HLADIO: —that morning they told us—it was '49—and they told us that we're coming to New York. Well, so foggy and all I heard was the—the ship's horns, you know, go booo, booo just all, the whole time. And I was so afraid we'd hit another ship. You couldn't see, you know. And then, so we were—when—I guess when we were getting closer, everyone was in long lines. You had to go in long lines for final checking of papers, you know. And then I don't quite remember the transition from the ship to Ellis Island. But I remember we were there and people had—they had to go through customs, you know, to check their things. Well, I was free. My sister had to help my parents and we didn't have much of anything anyway. But I remember looking up into a balcony of—all around, just, you know, I remember that. But there was noth—no—nothing up there. And I remember, you know, the—I guess the doors or something to—out, like—maybe that's where people got on. I don't know. But I remember—it must have been Red Cross with hot chocolate and powered sugar doughnuts. And they were so good. They just melted in my mouth and I—even now, when I'm in a store and I see powered sugar doughnuts my mouth waters. It was just—

DALEY: And this was—

[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE B]

HLADIO: It was right there. it was, like, under the thing. You know, there were—people had all their things. Well, we didn't have much of anything but—but there were a table with la—ladies and hot chocolate and powdered sugar doughnuts. And then by the time—and then we were on a ferry and got on—oh, and when we got to New York, they told us we were going to Oakdale Jersey Farm, Joshua, Texas, that our sponsor was there and not in Ann Arbor, Michigan. My father says, "Oh, koboya." [PH] You know, cowboys. And so we were put on a train to the—I remember being on a ferry and then on a train to go to Joshua, Texas. And they gave my father $15 for food. And by then, it was evening already and I remember going—you know, the train going through towns and some drive-ins and some lights. And there was none of that in, you know, war-torn Germany, and it was just so pretty, the lights, you know,

just so pretty. And it took us—I know it took us more than a day, probably two, maybe two and a half days—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: —to get to Texas. And—

DALEY: Well, before we get to Texas—

HLADIO: Sure.

DALEY: I just wanted to ask, on the ship—

HLADIO: Uh-huh.

DALEY: —were there different nationalities?

HLADIO: Oh, everyone.

DALEY: Many different?

HLADIO: Oh, yes. Oh, everyone. There were all kinds of nationalities and most sick. You know, most sick. You know, you really had to have a strong constitution not to—not to throw up. And they—the tables had those edges on them, you know, so you wouldn't—and I would go and I'd—I'd go and get—eat food and then I'd try to bring some for my sister. But she couldn't eat. She was just—she—she was sick and sometimes I'd go and visit my mother. She was okay but was—a lot of people were sick. And it was a—a huge boat. Can you imagine what it would have been like, you know, a hundred years ago when boats were not so good? You know.

DALEY: Did you roam around the ship?

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: Explore?

HLADIO: Yeah, they—and they actually had activities. I think they had movies and they had places—yeah, I did. There was another girl, Polish girl, that she and I—you know, shoes got white from being outside and running around. And I remember when the ship would go—he tried to limit us going on board when it was real bad. But still, when the ship would go up, we'd wait. And then when the ship would go down we'd run down. Then it'd go up, we'd run back. You know. [chuckles] So we—I explored. You know, crawled all over. But they're all nationalities, all kinds of nationalities sponsored by all kinds of people.

DALEY: And this is an Army transport ship?

HLADIO: Yeah, yeah.

DALEY: Were there soldiers on it?

HLADIO: No, uh-uh. They brought—apparently, they brought soldiers over to Germany and then they—well, maybe—there had to have been if they were—if it was an Army ship. But I didn't—I don't remember being afraid of anybody. Maybe that's how I consider soldiers.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: I'm sure they had to run it. And I—it—I looked on—on camps. My son-in-law told me about the camps and so I looked up in here. And also it had ships that carried refugees, and it was C.H. Muir. Because I thought it was the naturalist. But it's not; it was C.H.—General C.H. Muir. And so I'd have to—have to learn how to use a computer more so I could look at the manifest and all that stuff for—

DALEY: Now, wh—the program that brought displaced persons from Europe—

HLADIO: Uh-huh.

DALEY: —to America, was that an American plan or was that a United Nations plan?

HLADIO: The—we were sponsored—there—for instance, there was Catholic Action. Then there was Ukrainian Congress Committee. What happened was America—Truman signed a bill allowing close to 200,000 refuges to come, like 185,000-something refuges to come. Now, apparently the different nationalities looked for sponsors for people, because Ukrainian Congress Committee is the one that found a sponsor. They advertised all over the United States, just like during Vietnam era, they advertised for sponsors. And so they advertised and L.D. Shipman, Mr. Shipman and his wife, Ruth, agreed to—applied to sponsor us. Now, so—and then, of course, all nationality—I don't know if they wrote proposals or if they said we'd find sponsors—I don't know how that was and I'm not sure how long it lasted, till maybe they exhausted the—the limit of the allowable refuges. I don't know how it was but we were—Ukrainian Congress Committee found sponsors for us. Now, Polish organizations found sponsors for Polish people. I'm sure many—you know, other nationalities did the same thing. And I guess it's similar to some of the stuff that has been now—I know that, for the longest time, United States didn't allow immigrants unless they had relatives here, you know, or unless they

specifically had talents that were not—you know, professions that were not—that were needed here.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: So—but our—we were found a sponsor through that. It was—it was amazing that we came, like with—between the time we applied and the time we came was probably less than three months—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: —which is, you know—

DALEY: Oh, okay. If your husband can keep the TV—

HLADIO: Yeah. Bill. Bill. He can't hear.

DALEY: Okay. But you said originally you were sponsored to go to another state?

HLADIO: We were spon—they thought they found a sponsor in Ann Arbor, Michigan for us. But when we came to America, either someone else went there or else the sponsor backed out; I don't know.

DALEY: Yeah.

HLADIO: We don't know what happened.

DALEY: Okay. So you went to Texas—

HLADIO: Yes.

DALEY: —with these people—

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: —who sponsored you.

HLADIO: Yes.

DALEY: What did they have you do?

HLADIO: Well, when people agreed to come to America, they agreed to do any kind of work for a year that was found for them. That was a contract. And so the people in Texas owned Jersey Farm, a dairy farm, and so they had 60 cows. So my—my mother loved it. So they had—so we lived with a family and they had a daughter my age, who was 12 and a

half, and a younger son and younger daughter. And they—well, they had machines to milk the cows. And so my parents worked there. My father also helped with the maintenance of the buildings. My mother loved milking cows and all this stuff and—and pigs and the chickens and all that. My father, he hated milking cows and they hated him too. You know, they—he'd kick—they'd kick him and he'd kick them. But they were there for almost a year and it was probably the best thing that happened to us, because after—after five years of homelessness, of really not knowing where—not enough food, not enough place—we had our own place. It was a garage but it was our own. The people of Joshua, Texas were the kindest people ever. Then on the farm we had milk. We had chickens. We had—my mother made cream, butter. The farmer—prepared ground with him. My mother made—made a garden, every—you know, huge garden. And they were just very kind and the children, the students in Joshua were very accepting. They—the—the whole school was in one building at that time. It was a small school, just one class of each, just about. So they were just kind people and we needed that. They were—there was no—there was one family 40 miles away that was from Ukraine. There were no other immigrants around so it was total immersion and—

DALEY: There was no bad feelings or you were accep—well—well, you were accepted?

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: You felt you were accepted?

HLADIO: Yeah, the chil—the students—my sister was in 11th grade and then they said she was too smart; she knew too much. So they put her in 12th grade. They had a—they actually had a shower for her. She remembers getting first lipstick, first penny loafers, fir—you know, they were just very, very kind people. And that's—and I think after five years of homelessness and of—of not knowing where—it was like—in Ukrainian they would say, "[speaking in Ukrainian]," "not in a corner and not into the door." You didn't know where you were going to be. Their kindness was absolutely the best thing that could have happened to us. We got the spiritual, the nurturing, the—the social nurturing, the food nurturing. It was just—it was the best thing. We just said it was—as a family, we say it was God's plan that we be there so that we not only come to life physically but spiritually all around. They were just very kind people.

DALEY: Where is Joshua, Texas?

HLADIO: It's about 20 miles south of Fort Worth.

DALEY: Oh, okay.

HLADIO: Mr. and Mr. Shipman are—have died. Their—I visited there in ’94—’92, ’94, Miss—Mrs. Ship—Mrs. Shipman and then my sister was there about five, six years ago. And they were just good people, you know, almost Mayberry-type people. And that has made a difference. I—I think that sort of grounded us where when we came up north, and it’s a bit more harsh up here, less—less welcoming because there were so many people that was—we got the basis there and were able to—to use our talents. America has been good to us. We’ve really—America is the best country in the world, warts and all. Well, I mean, will help anybody anywhere, regardless of religion, origin—you know, national origin, any of that. We really—you know, we have a way to go but so does everyone. But we’re still—the freedom. You know, we’re free to develop our talents. If we’re willing to work for it, we could achieve it, you know. It—it’s still—it—it’s a—it’s a blessed place. We—we have everything because we work for it. You know, we—and we care.

DALEY: Was it hard to learn English in school?

HLADIO: Well, I—for me, when I came, and it may have been the war—I don’t remember stuttering when I was a child. But when I—I was in three cultures in three different years. You know, 40—you know, was Polish, then Ukrainian, then English from ’48, ’49, ’50. You know. And so when I came to—to Texas I couldn’t say the letter ka, ga, la, and ra. So—and my name was Orysia Galadza and so I would say Oasia Awadza. I couldn’t—you know, but in Texas, it didn’t matter. You know, I could spell it out and write it out. And in Texas, they—th—in ’49 and ’50 they spoke Texan English. And I remember there was a teacher there and we used to call him Mr. He-ed. I didn’t know there was a different English because I didn’t know what English was to begin with. So it was Mr. He-ed. And very kind, very nice. Well, when it came to Ambridge, one of the people sent us a yearbook from Texas. And his name was Mr. Head. So I thought, ‘Okay, Mr. He-ed. What else were we saying?’ You know, so when I came to Ambridge the little—the English I learned was Texan English and, plus the stuttering and not being—pronouncing the letters, I came to Ambridge in eight grade. Texas was seventh grade. Ambridge was eighth grade. And of course, you know, before that was Ukrainian, Polish—

DALEY: Hmm.

HLADIO: Anyway, four different—four different places. And when they asked me the name and then asked me a few questions, they promptly put me in the slowest class there was. I mean, it was—I won’t say retarded but probably as close at 50 as it would be. But Dr. Venning [PH] was the

psy—school psychologist and he kept testing me and testing me. And after three months, he put me in regular classes. But it was still—there was no extra help. And at that time, there were so many immigrants coming that there couldn't have been. So it was sink or swim. And my parents, my father especially, put so much value in education that he said, "I can't help you but it's your job to learn." And by tenth grade, I was feeling comfortable and did well in school.

DALEY: So your family moved from Texas to Pennsylvania?

HLADIO: Yes, in '50.

DALEY: And was your—was that because your father found work or—

HLADIO: No, [chuckles] what happened was on the same ship that we were on was a family—was the sister of the boyfriend of my sister. My oldest sister was 17 and a half. She was dating a young man in Germany in Ukrainian camp. His sister came on a boat with us. She came to Ambridge and we were sent to Texas. Now, my sister didn't know she'd ever see her boyfriend again, Brutus. Well, three months later, he came to America through Catholic Action. And so then he—that was October, November, December. Anyway, by February he came to see her in Texas and he proposed. And he was six years older and she was 18. That was her birthday. So she accepted and so after she graduated in May they came to Ambridge, because she was living here. And once my father found out that there was a Ukrainian Catholic church here, there was no holding him back. So in August—middle of—middle, end of August, we took a bus and we came to Ambridge and that's how we got to Ambridge. Yeah.

DALEY: And did your father find work here?

HLADIO: Yeah. Initially, it was just—since he was a carpenter, people—Ukrainian people would get him jobs, you know, bit by bit. And then he found a job in National Electric Company here in Ambridge. And that's where he worked till he retired when he was 62. My father died in 1992 and my mother died four years ago. And he died while I was—Ukraine became free in '91 and in '92 the Ukrainian organization was looking for volunteers to teach English in Ukraine, so volunteered. So—in July, so—no, June. So I was going [unclear] at my own expense. So here, the night before, my father came. My mother came and we're talking and he was making tape for my uncle and all that. And he was 89 and I said, "Now, you take your medicine and don't die, because if you die, Lufthansa only flies Monday, Wednesday and Friday. And I'll be to Ukraine"—you know, at that time. And I said, "[unclear] Kiev [PH] and I'll be far away from Kiev. I won't—I won't make it for your funeral." Well, 10

days later he died. And I was [unclear] with him. So anyway, but I—I did make it back. And my sister said, "Since when did father listen to us?" You know, but anyway—so he never really got to hear my stories of visiting back in Ukraine because I—we had not gone back, because under communism, probably had—well, first, they didn't allow you to go to the village and, secondly, that's all I wanted to see was I didn't—and I didn't remember anything else. There wasn't anywhere else. So—but that's how we got to Ambridge and then, you know, and that. But America's been good to us. We have—my sister's oldest daughter has been in Foreign Service for 25 years. She's been—Moscow. Now she's in Berlin. My youngest daughter and her husband are now in Belgium because he's working there. They'll be there for four or five years. My brothers are in Ottawa and Miami, and nieces and nephews in Chicago and, you know, America's been good for us. But—

DALEY: How far—you continued your education in Ambridge. How far in school did you get?

HLADIO: Well, I graduated in '55. And the love of reading and love—anyway, graduated in '55, got married in '56, had six children by the time I was 30 but continued reading, just loved reading, you know. And when my youngest went to kindergarten I went to college, you know, during the day. So I was 39. I graduated from [unclear] University in elementary and special ed, taught Head Start, worked with severely, profoundly retarded. There were no teaching jobs so then I went and got a master's in child development, continued working in the field but not teaching public school, and so got a master's in child development from Pitt. And then in '82—and then in '85 I decided to go to for reading specialist. And so I have a reading specialist certificate and when I graduated, when I finished in '88 I was hired as a reading specialist. So I was a reading—Title 1 reading specialist till two years ago, retired, you know—well, total year—14 years of teaching. And then that fall the intermediate unit asked if I would teach English as a Second Language to immigrants. And so I'm going—so right at this time, this second year, I have a year and a half ago a boy—a 16-year-old boy arrived from Romania, not a word of English, sort of like me in '49. And so I've been working with him and he's making remarkable progress. In the meantime, I also—I just—last summer, I finished certification as an ESL teacher. So I'm doing what I love and pass on—

DALEY: Hmm.

HLADIO: —the kind of things that I wish someone had done with me, but probably as far as helping me. You know, I graduated, out of 300-some—I graduated 56th in my class with no help whatsoever, like, from eighth grade on. And—and I think, you know, people have so many talents from

all over the world. And if we foster and help people along to use those talents—because immigrants have made America great, their—their work ethic, their gratitude, their appreciating the opportunities that are available, you know. And so when we help others to achieve their potential, we help our—ourselves.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: You know.

DALEY: So how did you meet your husband?

HLADIO: Church.

DALEY: Oh, what's your husband's name?

HLADIO: Bill. Bill Hladio.

DALEY: Is he an immigrant?

HLADIO: His parents were. He was born in Ambridge, but church. You know, a long time ago everything revolved around church, all kinds of activities and—

DALEY: And he has Ukrainian ancestry?

HLADIO: Yeah, the same as I. In fact, his mother, I think, is half Polish. But she came over when she was 16 and his father probably when he was 20 or so.

DALEY: Uh-hmm. And children?

HLADIO: Our children are Richard, Mary Jean, Patty, Andrew, Paul and Annie and they're from 37 to 47. And they all went to universities and all are good, productive people.

DALEY: Great.

HLADIO: Our oldest son is an orthodox Ukrainian priest in Canada. Mary Jean is a teacher in Erie but now she home schools. She has six children. Patty is a financial aid director at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. Andrew as an attorney. He's a public defender also. Paul is a physics teacher in Ambridge, physics and math. And Annie has a—well, was a writer but she's home. She's now in Belgium with her husband and so she's—she's a mother [chuckles] [unclear]. But, I mean, she's—she worked as a writer.

DALEY: Grandchildren?

HLADIO: Yes, we have 16 grandchildren, from 19, the oldest. Three are in universities now and the youngest one is eight months old. We have 11 grandsons and five granddaughters. And again, we have Canada, Erie, Belgium, you know.

DALEY: And when did you move into this house?

HLADIO: Thirty-six years ago. Yeah, we bought—I've been—after we came to Ambridge, I'm actually the only of my—one of my parents' children who has stayed in Ambridge. My older sister lives about 12 miles up the river in [unclear] Beaver. But my—Roman lives in Brampton, Canada near Toronto—Irene—he's a Ukrainian Catholic priest. Irene lives in Erie. She—she teaches math. She's married and teaches math at [unclear] College. Let's see. Irene—Paul teaches in Florida and is also a chef. Paul—let's see. Who else? Peter has a Ph.D. in theology and he teaches at St. Paul University in Ottawa. And he's also in all kinds of ecumenical [unclear] and stuff and things. He's very famous.

DALEY: And was this—this is 1033 Beachwood?

HLADIO: No, Maplewood.

DALEY: Maplewood.

HLADIO: 1033 Maplewood Avenue, Ambridge.

DALEY: Is this the—the only place you—how many different places in Ambridge did you live?

HLADIO: I—we—I lived with my husband's mother on 22nd Street and we've been here 37 years. So—and my husband was born in his mother's house. Yeah, so we've lived here the whole time.

DALEY: I just wanted to ask just a few more questions. We're getting near the end of the tape. Do you remember—what are your specific memories of Ellis Island?

HLADIO: I remember that floor, you know, that main floor. I—I think when we went to visit it in, you know, five years ago, it must have been up those steps. But I don't remember going up the steps. I think we came off the ship somehow. I don't know how but I don't remember steps. But I remember that it was that floor and the balcony. But it was—it wasn't like it is now. You know, all around and then bags. Oh, there was a clear space in the

middle but there were bags, or suitcases, or satchels or whatever all—all around, you know. And of course, in the midst of that was almost like there were bags—bags here, bags there, bags there. And in the midst of that, some were not out in the middle but sort of like here, was a table with—with doughnuts [chuckles] and—and hot cocoa.

DALEY: Were you given a physical and legal examinations on [unclear]?

HLADIO: No, all—all that was done in Europe prior to our coming. In fact, there was none of that, even on a ship. On a ship, they just finalized the papers. All—all the things were done. I guess they probably saved them, sending people back, you know, because I—I remember the last camp. If you had—well, we were going to America and what they said is at about eight o'clock, at noon and in the evening, about six, they played American national anthem. Now, European national anthems are marching songs and kind of things. Well, American national anthem, we had no idea what it was. But we were told someone—and word of mouth got where if you're walking when the national—American national anthem is playing, you'll get held back. You'll go on the next ship. So, boy, we learned quickly that you better stop when that's playing. And so all the—all the preliminary, you know, and everything, examinations, the—the consulate, the kind of—you know, where you spy, where—who did you—the organiz—all—excuse me. All that was taken care of there.

DALEY: So how long do you think you spent on Ellis Island?

HLADIO: I don't think—I think it was just the transition, probably—I bet probably no more than a day because I know we were on a—what do you call one of those—tug—not tugboats, but that—and then we were on a train. So they took us to the train, wherever that was. Somehow, it was—we were on that little thing not long. It was almost like going from here to there and then go to the train and—because by nighttime, we were on train. We were on a train. They—I—I—we—you know, probably was no more than a day. We probably got there in the morning, by the time we passed customs and all that. And we were on the way by evening.

DALEY: Can you say, or sing or—a proverb or a prayer or something in Ukrainian—

HLADIO: Oh, sure.

DALEY: —so we get an idea of the sound of the language?

HLADIO: Oh, sure. Well, my parents would say, "[speaking in Ukrainian]." And then they would say, "[speaking in Ukrainian]." They would say, "Without God, you don't even cross the threshold." And then they would say,

"God's providence will help us." And that was their lifelong—you know, as—as bad as times may have been—as—as uncertain as times may have been, no matter where it was, their total faith in God's providence was just amazing. I don't know that I could ever live up to their faith.

DALEY: And what would you say are the most proudest things in your life? The things you feel proudest about doing or being?

HLADIO: I think the proudest, or perhaps most thankful for, is that—that we were given opportunities in America that we would not have had anywhere else. Our family. Not just my immediate family, my—but my parents, my brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews—we were given opportunities to earn an education and to use it for our own good and for others. And that is just such—proud of the—yeah, thankful for the—the opportunities and that we were able to use them in spite of the difficulties. You know, we weren't afraid to grab onto the opportunities. And so, proud of the children, proud of the brothers and sisters and just—and thankful.

DALEY: And just as an aside, did your parents become citizens?

HLADIO: Oh, yes, as soon as they could. My father went to night school. At that time, our community—I imagine many others—had night school. And he took English as long as they offered it. Both my parents became citizens as soon as they could, as soon as the five years were over—five, six years. Yeah. And they passed. They were so proud to be citizens. But my father was a Dem—my father was a Republican; my mother was a Democrat. He said, "That's to cover both bases."

DALEY: And was it easy for the children born in the Ukraine to become citizens?

HLADIO: For us? Oh, sure. I became a citizen before I was married and—in fact, around the same time—'56. Yeah, early '56, they came—'55, '56. And, oh, sure. I mean, they were—and I think my brother, Roman, became a citizen when they became a citizen because he was underage. But I was 18 already when they became—so I became a citizen on my own.

DALEY: Okay. Well, I want to thank you for the opportunity. Oh, do we have more time, do you think?

HLADIO: Oh, sure.

DALEY: Okay. Because I'd like to switch tape once more and continue on with a few more stories on the next tape.

[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE B]

[BEGIN TAPE 3, SIDE A]

DALEY: Okay. We're starting the third tape with Orysia Galadza Hladio. And I forgot to ask about a special event that your family had to mark their 50th anniversary of coming to the United States. You came back to Ellis Island?

HLADIO: Yes, we—my two nieces and nephew live in Westfield, New Jersey, which is the next train station stop before New York. And so they planned—the family planned a 50th anniversary visit to Ellis Island. So we had a daylong picnic, a—the grand—the younger brothers and sisters and grandchildren all met. And we had a dinner cruise around Ellis Island, but during the day we went to Ellis Island and visited. And when I walked up the stairs, and even though it was renovated and you wouldn't know—it was beautiful—and saw the balcony all around, it reminded me of when—when we were there. And it was—it was—I could even see where the table with the doughnuts and—powered sugar doughnuts and the—the hot chocolate was. I could just visualize, even though it was—it was almost like all the ghosts of 50 years ago were there. It was very moving. It was—and so we're all thankful that they were able to come to America when—

DALEY: And that was many—many people came to that.

HLADIO: Yeah, we had about 80 people. There were—in fact, my sis—my sister's husband's sponsors from Arkansas also came. So we had some guests but most of our family and children, grandchildren came and even my mother. And we were laughing because it was quite expensive for all of us to do that. And we were saying if my father—if our father had been around, he would have really been very, very angry that we spent all that money. He would have said, "You could send it to the seminaries to educate some priests, or Ukrainian universities or spend it on books." And my father was an artist. He carved Ukrainian art articles. He carved beautiful things and so here, when we returned home, my niece had a plate, a carved plate of my father's hanging above her kitchen door. And it had been there for about five years. Well, when we returned from the festivities, that plate was on the floor and had never fallen before. And so we laughed because we said our father said—and he had—he had been dead for seven years—we were saying, "Our father is saying, 'Huh, you didn't get away with it. I know what you're doing.'" But it was—we took lots of pictures, sang lots of songs. And at the end we sang "God Bless America" and—while we were going around Manhattan.

DALEY: And what was that date again?

HLADIO: It was—well, the 50th anniversary would have been October, 1949, but we did this in August while people were able to take vacations. So it was August of 1999.

DALEY: And you had taken a trip to—back to the Ukraine?

HLADIO: I've gone back to teach English four times, in '92, '94, '98 and '99 and visited our village, visited the house. The first time I went, I just cried and cried and cried because we were supposed to come back. We didn't—when we left in July of '44 we did not say goodbye to anyone because we were coming back in two weeks. And as a seven-and-a-half-year-old child, that was a promise that my parents didn't keep. And so when I went back the first time, I cried and—you know, and then second time was a little bit easy. And '98, '99 was easier yet. But in '98 when I went—we—I went to teach—in '98 and '99 I went to teach English to—a summer English-only course—a—a program for Lviv Theological Academy. And so we had to take a train to Carpatha Mountains, get off the train and then take trucks way up into the mountains. And this was in July. And we got off the train and we were in, oh, a little town. And then we went up in the mountains. And we came back and, again, I forget the name of the little town. But anyway, when I came home, I looked in the journal that my father kept. Scolla [PH]. The name of the town was Scolla. Scolla. I looked in my father's journal and I—when I was in Scolla in that train it was July, like, 28th or something. This was in '98. Well, I looked in my father's journal and in July 24th, he wrote, "We're passing through Scolla." And I got goose bumps. I thought, 'In 44, I passed through this town and here I am in '98 going through this town.' So, you know, it's—I—I think I needed to go back and—and did and I think it's made—I don't have that longing that I had all those years for—to—to go back, because it was my hometown. On the other hand [chuckles], when I went back to the village and I saw the mud I used to play in and saw the—the difficulties that the people—the hardships that the people have—they still have to live off the land, I thought, 'Thank God for God's providence for bringing us to America,' because the only thing that's different there now is electricity. But that's it.

DALEY: Did you meet a lot of people who were relatives and—

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: —people who knew you?

HLADIO: Well, I was seven—I met cousin—yeah, the relatives that were there, I saw and met them. And—and my uncle was alive. My aunt—one aunt was alive. This past September—oh, and my sister went for the first time. She's 73. And so she met with our 90-year-old uncle, my father's brother,

and—and cousins. But my brothers, the—Peter and my brother, Roman, have gone to teach Ukraine almost every year. In fact, my brother, Peter, was rector or—or dean of the Lviv Theological Academy, stayed—for a year. He stayed there with his family. So we've—our parents—I don't know how they did it but our parents told us to love and respect America but also to remember—

DALEY: Hmm.

HLADIO: —our origins. You know, our origins and be grateful for that. So it was—they really did a balancing act. Both of them had only third-grade education because that's all that was available, you know. My father was born in 1903, my mother in 1911. That's all that was available at the time. Yet, they were brilliant in—in—in their wisdom.

DALEY: Hmm.

HLADIO: In the passing on that wisdom, you know, of the balancing. Yes, my father—you know, he wouldn't go back because he—well, first, he was afraid. Now, maybe that it's free, he might have. But he wouldn't go back. On the other hand, like my brothers—my brothers that were born here are both fluent in Ukrainian. I mean, and at home we had to speak Ukrainian. That was it, even when I was an adult, even [chuckles] 50, 60 when we'd go to visit my—not 60. He died when I was—anyway, in the 50s when I was—we were afraid to speak English in his presence because—

DALEY: Hmm.

HLADIO: —that was, you know, the—it was important. So—but in some ways, he sacrificed his getting ahead by maintaining his old culture, you know, and—but, you know, he's passed on the—the love of our new country and opportunities but also the love of the old. And I guess we could love many things, but our love for Ukraine doesn't diminish our love for America. You know, a person's capacity to love is limitless. You know, so we—we—we were really blessed. My father—my father. My brother, Peter, is just in the area giving a retreat at the Byzantine Seminary. So I picked him up Wednesday and he went back today, but he stayed there. And as we talked, we were marveling. He said, "You know, our parents, they were brilliant." He said, "I know people with Ph.D.s that don't have the sense that our parents did. He says, "They"—he says, "I'm thinking if my parents with third-grade education could get it, why can't you?" But it's just—I guess their life was so tough. They had to solve so many problems and—and tackle—and find so many solutions. And apparently, it made them wiser.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: And I imagine many immigrants are very, very wise because of circumstances, you know, and maybe—maybe we here, when life's too easy, we don't develop the talents that we—that we have. You know, maybe we're too lazy or maybe we just don't want to. Or maybe we sit in front of the television and, you know—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: And—but—

DALEY: Did—did both your parents eventually learn English?

HLADIO: My father r—read and wrote English very well. He was afraid to speak because he says, "I'm not speaking it well." I mean, his Eng—you know, he understood everything. He read a lot. My mother, she—she could talk to anybody. And she wasn't—you know, she'd—her English wasn't perfect. But on the other hand, she wasn't afraid to speak. She had more of the practical English where he had the academic. But he was afraid to make mistakes.

DALEY: Uh-hmm. And what do you think about what's going on recently in the Ukraine?

HLADIO: Well, I think it's wonderful. I think it's so exciting that—it's another stage of—of freedom because, for so many years—for hundreds, thousands of years, and—Ukraine was oppressed. And any time—in the villages or in towns, any time leaders arose and spoke up they were destroyed. You know, they were sent to Siberia or killed or, you know, they were eliminated. And so, after awhile, people became afraid to speak up, or else leaders—like during World War II, they were taken to Siberia or they were taken to Germany and—and the Ukraine was left like a—a—a—without a leader. You know, like orphans. And so now they're finally beginning—arise without being afraid of being poisoned or killed, although that's still going on. So it's an exciting time. It'll take a while before Ukraine finds its own. But it—it—it's an exciting time.

DALEY: And has that election been verified now?

HLADIO: You know, I haven't seen the recent—because, Yanokovitch [PH] doesn't want to concede. So I don't know if Yushchenko [PH]—I haven't seen. I haven't looked on the computer recently so I don't know. You know, the last few days, because it has to be very recent.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: So I don't know. But it is an exciting time to—and brave people—and apparently, from what I understand, this last election people were not afraid, as they have been in the past. So it is—it'll take a while. When I was teaching English and they were university-level students, and this is '98 and '99, and some were seminarians, and there were 18 to 22, 23—one of the young men who's now in Rome studying for a Ph.D.—one of the young men, he said, "We're all tainted with communism. We grew up"—he was about 15 or so when communism fall. He says, "We all have the communist spirit in us. And Ukraine won't be free. Ukraine won't think differently till every—this whole generation of us dies out. Then it'll be free." And I thought, 'Well, you know, he's about 20—let's see—26 now, maybe so.' So you know, that's—that generation is coming. The older people are coming to, you know, die and—but it's—it's—it's an exciting time.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: It—

DALEY: But just that they have to be wary of the influence of Russia.

HLADIO: Yeah, communism and—and foreign rule in general. Really, they've—they've not—you know, my father used to say if—if a horse knew how strong it was he wouldn't let a mere human ride it. And the same, you know, with nations. You know, they don't have to destroy others to be strong themselves. You know, they each have talents. They each have, you know—for instance, Ukraine has rich soil, you know, coal deposits, all that. They have—they just haven't learned how to manage all that.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: But part of it is because they've been under foreign rule. It's a wonder Ukraine exists at all, really.

DALEY: [clears throat] Excuse me. Okay. Well, that—do you have anything to add that you'd like to add?

HLADIO: No, just thank you and—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: —next time I go up to Ellis Island I'll be—

DALEY: Oh, definitely.

HLADIO: —looking. Do you have any sites for Ellis Island that I could—

DALEY: Yeah, I can—I can give you a list after the interview.

HLADIO: A list? Okay, okay.

DALEY: But I just wanted to ask before we sign off if you can give me another saying or prayer in Ukrainian—

HLADIO: Hmm.

DALEY: —with the English translation?

HLADIO: Okay, let's see. Prayer? Well—

DALEY: Or something your father may have told you.

HLADIO: You know, a prayer that—well, my father used to say lots of things. You know, like he said, "God's providence." A prayer that we used to pray a lot and when—for instance, when I—when the bombs would be falling and—and they'd be coming, the closer the plane came, the louder I prayed. My sister still remembers, would be "Our Father" in Ukrainian, you know. "[speaking in Ukrainian]." And that's "Our Father" in Ukrainian and I would just—you know, the—as a child, that was my—that was my, I don't know what, blanket. You know, my s—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: —security blanket for prayer, really.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: And that's—God's providence has provided.

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: I mean, my parents came at—like Abraham and Sarah and came with just, what, six of us together and now we have about 80. And all—in all—all kinds of positions of helping others. You know, helping others and—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: —that was what they did too, so—

DALEY: Uh-hmm. Well, thank you very much for allowing me to—

HLADIO: Oh, thank you.

DALEY: —talk to you for so long and—

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: —get so much information, very interesting and—

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: —very valuable information for people to know about your history and the history of the Ukraine.

HLADIO: Yeah.

DALEY: So thank you very much.

HLADIO: And I—I thank many people, you know, as I meet people and talk. Like, even the boy I have now from Romania, all of us have stories to tell. It's just that in my family, [clears throat] my parents and—my parents way of entertaining us was to tell us their story and their parents stories and their—the village stories. That was—they talked. In some families, they don't talk. And so—but in ours, they did and so we were blessed—

DALEY: Uh-hmm.

HLADIO: —you know, that they told us—

DALEY: Mm-hmm.

HLADIO: —stories.

DALEY: Okay. Well, thank you very much. This is Kevin Daley for the Ellis Island Oral History Program and I've been talking to Orysia Galadza Hladio. I pronounced that right, [chuckles] I hope, in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. It's January 10th, 2005 and I'm signing off. Thank you.

HLADIO: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]