

EI-1398

CATHARINE LODYJENSKY

BIRTHDATE: JUNE 20, 1916

INTERVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 31, 2005

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 89

RUNNING TIME:

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME

INTERVIEW LOCATION: NEW YORK, NY

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

RUSSIA, FRANCE, 1940

AGE: 24

SHIP: NYASSA

PORT: LISBON, PORTUGAL

RESIDENCES:

- **RUSSIA: PETROGRAD [ST. PETERSBERG]**
- **FRANCE: PARIS**
- **US: New York, NY**

LEVINE: Today is October the 31st, the year 2005. I'm here in the Upper West Side of Manhattan with Catharine Lodyjensky, Dr. Lodyjensky, who is of interest to Ellis Island and to being recorded for Ellis Island for a number of reasons. Actually three. One is that she came here. She immigrated to this country in 1941. Although she did not come through Ellis Island, she received her citizenship papers at Ellis Island, after that, and then she became a physician working for the US Public Health Service at Ellis Island and did that for—part time for a year and a half, up until the time in 1954 that Ellis Island closed.

This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I just want to say I'm delighted to have your interview in our collection and to meet you and to talk with you. Let's just start at the beginning. If you would say where you were born and when.

LODYJENSKY: I was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, which at that time was called Petrograd, which is an exact translation of Petersburg, and—yes, I was born in June 20th. However, this was the old style. Actually, I was born in July 3rd, but it was misspelled in my birth certificate. So I have two birthdays. [Laughs]

LEVINE: [laughs] Oh, okay. So you were born in 1916 and then the Revolution—

LODYJENSKY: The Revolution start—happened in '17. In the early of '17 and I didn't stay with this house very long. As long as—as soon as I was born, the poor things were thrown out.

LEVINE: So how long did your family stay in—

LODYJENSKY: My family stayed there—

LEVINE: Petersburg?

LODYJENSKY: My—my father was exiled by the communist government in 1923 because he didn't agree with their policies and my mother and I were allowed to leave the country and re-joined him in France, in December 1924.

LEVINE: Okay, what was your father's name?

LODYJENSKY: My father was Mr. John Lodyjensky, or Ivan in Russian.

LEVINE: And—and can you say anything about his—his—the stands that he took which—which prompted him to leave?

LODYJENSKY: Well, my father was born in 1872. He was a student in 1905 at the University of St. Petersburg and from his youth, he was, I wouldn't say revolutionary, but certainly a dissident and he was member of the Menshevik Party, which was the social democratic party in Russia, which corresponds about the Labor Party in England. And he was opposed to the government and during the war against Japan in 1905, he was at the head of the—one of the heads of the student revolt against the Czar, and of course after the—after this revolt was put down, he was—[Laughs]—he was excluded from the university. And then he worked and eventually—but he was equally opposed to the policies of the Soviets, of the Bolsheviks, so after the Revolution—before the Revolution he was put to jail once or twice for being opposed to the Czar and for propaganda. He was never a terrorist of any kind. He was a very kind and decent person, but after the revolution, he was persecuted by the Soviets, which the government was kind enough to exile him abroad, instead of sending him to what eventually became the gulag.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. But he was arrested—went to jail and—

LODYJENSKY: He was arrested several times, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: By both parties.

LEVINE: Yeah, so he was—

LODYJENSKY: And he was the most ethical, the most kindest person, but he had strong ideas and he kept them. And so the Soviets of course they couldn't tolerate this opposition, especially as he was not exactly a partisan of the Czar, but he was close to their philosophy and yet opposed to their actions.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Do you know how his—where his dissidence got started? Did—

LODYJENSKY: Well, he was—why he was like that?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Achh. Well, he was from a family of the nobility, actually, and he decided that the world had to be reformed, and there he was.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And he spent a great deal of his life trying to improve the conditions, which I must say were dire before the Revolution and got worse afterwards.

LEVINE: So was his family for generations before his birth, from the St. Petersburg area?

LODYJENSKY: No, they had a property—well, they lived in St. Petersburg, but they had apartments or—not a house, but apartments, as far as I know. But they had a property between Moscow and St.

Petersburg in the Department of Tver, T-V-E-R and they had lands. And when my grandfather was born, he was quite well-to-do, but when after the liberation of the serfs and after all the reforms, the landed gentry lost the lands because it was based on slave labor, actually, which they didn't have any more. So my grandfather lost his endowment and he worked and my father did, too.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm, and how about your mother? What was her name and her maiden name?

LODYJENSKY: Her name was Maria [unclear]. That was for patronymic. Um, she—her name was—this is my grandfather's name. Donskoy, D-O-N-S-K-O-Y. She was born Donskoy.

LEVINE: Donskoy. D-O-N-S-K-O-Y.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and Maria.

LODYJENSKY: Maria, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: And they were farmers.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And well-to-do farmers and they sent all their—my grandparents were literate, both of them. They could read and write and they

had lands. The land, and they had a store in their village and they were fairly well to do before the Revolution and they sent all their ten children to school. And my mother became a physician. Her next sister became a physician. The next one was a dentist. One was a schoolteacher and one became a *hausfrau* (home keeper). [Laughs] But that's—and, of course, boys also went. They were somewhat younger and so they—they are two brothers who were quite young in 1923 and then they were declared enemy of the people because they had lands. They were called kulaks and they had to run away not to be arrested, and we don't actually know what happened to them.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: I told that story in this booklet, if you are—

LEVINE: I want—I want to mention that—

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Dr. Lodyjensky is going to give to Ellis Island a book that she made, based on her mother and her mother's life.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: And so we'll have that on file and this will tell more about your mother and her family and—

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So this farm really that your mother's family had, it—it—there were a number of people working on it?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, yes. Yes, they had fields. They had cattle. They also had flourmills and they had the village store. So they were comfortable.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Now, if you go back in the story of my mother's family, her great grandfather—yes, her great grandfather had arrived in Siberia as a convict. He had been—he and his wife were serfs, practically slaves, if you wish, though they weren't called that, in a place near Moscow. Near the place of the Battle of Borodino, where Napoleon was—what is on the —defeated. And they were the property of a very unpleasant old lady and five of the peasants couldn't stand her anymore and they smothered her with pillows. So naturally they were caught—did I lose my—

LEVINE: I'll just put that so it doesn't—

LODYJENSKY: Yeah. So they were naturally caught and he was sent to Siberia as a convict. There was no death penalty for the usual crimes. The only crimes which were punished with death penalty in Russia before the Revolution were crimes against the state. In other words, assassinating the Tsar or the governor or somebody. I mean terrorists acts were punished by death, but if you killed your neighbor for one reason or another, that wasn't punished by death. You were sent to the mines. So my grandfather went there—you want me to tell this story?

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: It's in there, but that's okay.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: So he was sent to the mines and the law was such—this was in the 1840s, as far as I can figure out, and so he went through a jail in Moscow and that jail was run by a very excellent physician of German descent called Dr. Haas, who tried to help the families and keep them together. So by law my grandmother was allowed to follow her husband, but they had one daughter whose name was Dominica, with a—who was eight years old, and that daughter of theirs belonged to the family of the poor old lady that they smothered. Poor old lady—she was apparently extremely unpleasant, but anyway. So this daughter had to be bought out from the family in order to be able to go with her parents and Dr. Haas arranged this and some liberal officer donated the funds and she was bought out and she could follow her mother and father into Siberia. And they came to near the capital of Siberia, which is Irkutsk. So one way or the other, she—I don't know exactly when the convict died or whether he was liberated eventually, but she and her mother prospered somehow. And this Domenica married well. She had two daughters. One of them was my grandmother, who apparently either married well or anyway at that time they were quite prosperous, as I told you. And my grandmother had ten children, of whom my mother was the oldest. So this is—

LEVINE: Yes.

LODYJENSKY: This is why I wrote this, because I think it's a very interesting history in itself. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Absolutely. Absolutely. So you—your mother—your mother and father also were in Paris with you?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see.

LODYJENSKY: Well, the thing is this. How --it is --- came my father from Petersburg and my mother from Irkutzk meet?

LEVINE: Yes.

LODYJENSKY: My mother—my father was kicked out of the university and just before the war, he decided to complete his studies and went to Estonia. There was one university where—which was not control—controlled by the state and he was able to attend lectures there and my mother, though she wasn't terribly active, but her cousins were equally dissident, was not allowed to go to the university in Siberia. So she eventually went to Estonia to finish—to become a doctor and that's where she met my father.

LEVINE: I see. So in other words, if someone was dissident—

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: They—that—

LODYJENSKY: They both.

LEVINE: That was their—that was a way out.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: To go to Estonia for studying.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm. Exactly.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Wow. Is—is there anything more—maybe it's in your book, but about your mother's dissidence?

LODYJENSKY: Well, because at that time, and -- a good many of the people were dissidents because of tyranny and the abuses of the Tsar's power. People wanted reforms, so there was propaganda. There was—there were strikes. There were terrorism. So people tried to improve the lot—the laws of the country. So that's why they were there.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: That's what they were doing.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now—

LODYJENSKY: In Siberia, as well as in Petrograd or Moscow.

LEVINE: Now, were—were your mother and father turning away from traditional religion to be more—

LODYJENSKY: Oh, certainly. They were completely—I was brought up outside of religion.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: I was christened because that was what was to be done when you were born, I mean, but we—we were all completely outside of religion.

LEVINE: I see. So it would have been—

LODYJENSKY: Not ethics. Not—

LEVINE: No, no.

LODYJENSKY: But—

LEVINE: But the church. It would have been the Russian Orthodox Church? Is that what it was?

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah. So I guess the—the people who—young people who were being educated were—were more and more turning away from—

LODYJENSKY: Exactly.

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah. So, well—so they met. Did they ever tell you—did they just meet at the university? Is that—?

LODYJENSKY: That's right. They were students. Mother was in medicine. Father was studying biology. They met and that was that. [Laughs] You know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: My father fell for her and I mean it was a very good marriage in that sense.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: They had a lot of trouble, but those were money troubles.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay.

LODYJENSKY: Not personal.

LEVINE: So in other words, then they stayed—how long did they stay in Estonia then?

LODYJENSKY: Well, it took probably four years.

LEVINE: And is that the way—

LODYJENSKY: Two or three years. I don't remember—know exactly.

LEVINE: And then what, came back to Petrograd?

LODYJENSKY: And then they married and went—lived in St. Petersburg. And my mother once in awhile visited them. ----- In 1923, just when my father was already abroad, she went to visit her parents in Siberia

and took me and my sister along, and I describe my—my impressions of that trip.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, how old were you then, when you went—

LODYJENSKY: Well, I was seven.

LEVINE: Seven. So you—so in Siberia at that time, it was the USSR.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: And people were—were—

LODYJENSKY: Well, this was—Siberia hadn't been touched too much by war. There were civil war, but it wasn't too too rugged, and this was a very short period where there was a sort of relaxation of the Soviet power. They wanted to reconstruct a little bit of economy, so while I was at my grandmother, the family was still together and the conditions weren't bad.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: So—but this was a very short period because as soon as we left, the screw turned and in 1927, were the big purges and all that sort of thing and my—my cousins— my, -- my uncles had to run away, I think in 1925.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So did you keep contact with them?

LODYJENSKY: Uh, no. You see, because my father was exiled and was known as what he was, that is anti Soviet, we didn't dare to write them, but one of my mother's sisters had married a Czechoslov—a Czech from Slovakia. The Czech army went through Siberia and they picked up my aunt and she lived in Czechoslovakia and not being political, she wrote to her—her mother. So we had some news until she unfortunately died quite young, relatively speaking, in 1939. So after that, we had absolutely no communication.

LEVINE: Hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: That—that was it.

LEVINE: And then you never went back there or—after?

LODYJENSKY: I went back in 1972, after my mother died.

LEVINE: Okay.

LODYJENSKY: And I made another trip, two other trips in '98, I think. 1998 I did, and then one which I didn't complete because I got sick [Laughs] later on.

LEVINE: Do you know what became of your family—?

LODYJENSKY: Absolutely not.

LEVINE: Under the USSR?

LODYJENSKY: My family—my Lodyjensky family I had some news by a cousin who during the softening, which happened before the Perestroika, was able to come to Paris, but my mother's family we never really – never found out. [Phone rings] Oh.

LEVINE: Okay, we're pausing here. [Tape off/on]

LODYJENSKY: [It's probably nothing, but ---] Paris, we went to school both of us.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Well, you—when you—your mother and father came back to St. Peters—Petrograd.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: And then you were born and your sister was born as well?

LODYJENSKY: Yes, in 1921. Yes.

LEVINE: And then—and then do you have any memories at all?

LODYJENSKY: Of what?

LEVINE: Of Petrograd?

LODYJENSKY: I certainly do.

LEVINE: Oh! What—what are the things you remember?

LODYJENSKY: Well, for instance, there again I told the story in there.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: That we lived at one time—when my sister was born, we lived with my uncle who had a large apartment in St. Petersburg and it was cold. We had mice and I had whooping cough and my uncle was a great tease. Things were, you know, very bad. In 1921 was about the worst famine, when she was born, and I know that my uncle, somehow or other, had gotten a little black caviar and he teased me and said, “Well, Catharine, why don’t you eat this? —[How they call it?] This oil to—to grease wheels, and I would start crying and he was very happy with it. [Laughs]

LEVINE: [Laughs]

LODYJENSKY: Then he took—he took me to a—a soccer game and I was about this high, you know. He was—my uncle was interested in—in sports at that time and he took me to the socc---- and of course I got the ball in the nose.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: It was a spent ball, but it—it was—that put me off soccer for a good many times, many years. But then eventually he got married and he got children himself, after we left Russia. And the poor devil remained—he was quite high in banking. He was a—and in 1942 he literally starved to death in Petrograd ----in Leningrad. So his—his daughter survived, but he died like that. He and a first cousin of my father, they literally starved to death and I never learned and unfortunately my father never knew that until the 1970s when my cousin—my distant cousin came to Paris. And so this was an atrocious story.

LEVINE: So this was the famine. This was the—uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow. Wow. Now, your name Catharine, was it—do you think Catharine the Great? Was that—was that a heroine of—of your mother or father?

LODYJENSKY: Not—not particularly. It's just a common name.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: One of my mother's sisters was named Catharine, too. So -- she was also a doctor.

LEVINE: Oh. Okay, well, so do you remember leaving? Do you remember the plan to leave?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, yes. I remember that very well. We took the train and there's a little anecdote which again I—I wrote down. My mother—it was 1924, so it was—the Soviet regime was in full bloom and you could take this and not take that. And there was one book, which I have, which is not her list, and I took my book and all the time we were traveling through one frontier after—one border after the other, I was expecting "**them**" to take my book. [Laughs] But I still have it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What book? What book is it?

LODYJENSKY: It's a story of a little boy who was very heroic during the siege of Sebastopol where England and France attacked Russia.
[Laughs] 1970, '60. **1860**. Not 1919.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: So.

LEVINE: So that's what you took. Wow, and what about your mother, did she—was she able to take much with her?

LODYJENSKY: No, very little. Unfortunately, she left photographs and letters and documents with one of my father's sisters and that disappeared during the Great War. So that's—we don't have very much of background.

LEVINE: I see.

LODYJENSKY: Whatever she told me and she wasn't speaking much. I'm not crying. My eyes water.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: It's—it's a result of old age. But she didn't—she was a very contained person. She didn't speak much. It's only after my father died and we—she liked to drive with me and then she would open up and tell me stories.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: But before, my father was very talkative. Poor lady didn't have a chance.

LEVINE: A chance. Uh-huh. It seems like it was more usual for women to become doctors in Russia than

LODYJENSKY: [interposed] Well, there was no

LEVINE: it was here at that time.

LODYJENSKY: how should I say? They could do it if they wanted to. There was no defense, no limitation. They could, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: And there were—in my family, my father's sister also was a doctor from the other side. So there were actually four women physicians related to me.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: So—

LEVINE: Yeah, because in this country women didn't—

LODYJENSKY: No.

LEVINE: Really didn't do that back—

LODYJENSKY: When I arrived here in 1940

LEVINE: One.

LODYJENSKY: there were seven thousand female physicians in the country.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: That's the figure I got. I don't guarantee it, but that's what I was told.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: And the ones of—which were here in New York, were mostly German refugees.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: There were relatively very few Americans.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, so—so your father was exiled and then he—he was there then. He was in—in France when you got there?

LODYJENSKY: Yes, and they had a very hard time financially, but they managed to bring us both and we both went to school. And by the time the war came, I was in my last year of medical school and she already was at the university and studying chemistry and she was very bright. But, you know, it hadn't been without its ups and downs, but we did it.

LEVINE: Right, right.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Now, you mentioned you stopped in Germany for about a week. Why was that?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, it was just a matter of papers.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Okay. Okay. So you—you—you managed to get—to get along and was your mother able to work in—

LODYJENSKY: Unfortunately not. Not.

LEVINE: No.

LODYJENSKY: There was something with the papers which wasn't—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: I mean, you know, it wasn't easy.

LEVINE: Yeah, and how about your father? What was he able to do for work?

LODYJENSKY: Well, he did this and that and the other thing. He worked in a newspaper. He was an accountant in a very small place. I mean he did what he could and it was very—because he wasn't young anymore. See, he was—when I was born, he was forty. Past

forty and so by the time we got to France, he was fifty and then he was in his sixty and seventies. By the time we left Paris in 1940, he was—'40. Well, he was pushing seventy.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

[END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1] [BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1]

LEVINE: Now, were there other Russians who had—was there a little community of Russians in—in Paris?

LODYJENSKY: There was a very large community in Paris.

LEVINE: A large.

LODYJENSKY: There were all kinds of Russians. Great part of them had been with the White Army, which fought against the Soviets and had been evacuated, either to—well, through Turkey to Constantinople and eventually to --- some settled in Yugoslavia, but a good many settled in France. It was --oh, maybe a hundred thousand, something like that.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: So there was a very large community, which was actually a very—there was a good many writers, poets, painters, artists. Well, Rachmaninoff among others and so on, and Stravinsky and whatever. You know, you name them, all these big names. They were all—all around.

LEVINE: Wow. Huh.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Well, I—I know I've read it and I've heard it said that St. Petersburg was more French than France at one point, right? So France was really a place of culture that the Russians really gravitated to, anyway.

LODYJENSKY: Yes. That's right.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: That's right. Some people stayed in Germany, but then anyway, the Jewish part had to immigrate another time.

LEVINE: Right. Yeah, right. So it must have been quite a cultural expatriate community then.

LODYJENSKY: Oh, certainly.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Certainly.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: It was a very interesting—well, I was an adolescent and I must say, I went to a very good school because I could get a scholarship there, and my sister went to the lycee because she was younger then. And you know, we spoke French as the

French did and of course, the French culture was at the basis of it all, but at home, we always spoke Russian and my parents made a point of it.

LEVINE: Ah.

LODYJENSKY: And I speak—still speak it fluently. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Oh, wow. Wonderful. Do you have a chance—do you have people here that—

LODYJENSKY: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay, so then when you left, it was because the Germans had now come in and occupied Paris.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm. Right.

LEVINE: So I assume everyone was trying to leave.

LODYJENSKY: Indeed. That was a big—that was something incredible because the Germans occupied Holland. Then Belgium. Then the north of France. Then they came to Paris and Alsace and Lorraine, and all those people run because they expected the Germans to behave like they did during the First World War. In other words, killing people, raping girls, making—stealing and so on and so forth. And the one thing that Hitler did, which was extremely smart, the discipline of the German Army was absolutely perfect. There was none of that. So—but in the meantime, there were hordes, hordes, hordes of people that went down south. Some

were bombed. The Germans strafed some of the refugees, but actually very little, compared to what they could have done.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And once people came and there was a armistice. All the French could say, "Oh, they are correct." We have to tell them, say that they are correct. Of course, no sooner they were there, that they tried to arrest the Jews, but the French figured that, well, you know. And I must say that at that time we had no conception ----- and I know, I was an adult, ----of what actually was happening. You know, really, I must say to the discharge [sic] of the population that, you know, they said, "Well, they would be arrested," or "There will be labor camps," but nobody could imagine what was going on.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: That was until I left France. Once I came to America, of course, more information came, but then we actually didn't realize what was going on.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: I say that because of the shame of it all, you know, that. So once the Germans—when the armistice was signed, the Germans did the next smart thing. They said, "Well, dear people, you are all here. If you run away, now you go back. Here are trains. You don't have to pay for it. Go back." So actually France was not at that time, you know, broken down. It was not bombed or very little. There were very little destroyed. The French went back and

then the Germans, of course, started to take everything away, but gently, you know. They were correct, but they immediately got the bread and the wine and everything else. So the French all of a sudden realized that they were not so correct as all that. But France was not destroyed and the Germans could get all her resources. So I think that the one smart thing that Hitler did was for his own point of view.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: If he had done the same thing in Russia, he would get them conquered.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Because the Russians were quite ready to surrender, but because he treated them as inferior and so on and so forth, and in all kinds of trouble, well, you know, the Russians started to fight.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: That's my interpretation. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have speak like the way—

LEVINE: Yeah. No, that's—no, well, it's a valid point of view. Sure. Hmm. Okay, so—

LODYJENSKY: So when I came to this country—

LEVINE: Well, tell about coming—going. Everyone was leaving Paris.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: And everybody was I guess leaving from Portugal. That was the place where you could leave from, was it?

LODYJENSKY: This was the only way you could go, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: So we—the thing is this, my parents left with a group of social democrats and a good many of those people had relationship with the Jewish Labor Committee here, and the—the union—the unions which were here in New York. Especially the garment unions, and those people, among them were people who were the same group that was, had been in [unclear] in Paris and then was trying to escape Hitler. There were some had come to America and they knew the names and we got emergency visas to come to America. The whole group, and us also. [Laughs] So—

LEVINE: So you left—when you left Paris, did it take a while when you were in Portugal?

LODYJENSKY: [interposed] Well, yes, we stayed in Toulouse for about three or four months. Then we went to Versailles—to Marseilles where the consulate was.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: And if you have ever a chance to see the play by Carlo Menotti, The Consul, it was a very good takeoff.

LEVINE: Oh, good. That's good to know.

LODYJENSKY: It wasn't quite so brutal, but anyway, all these poor people trying to prove that they were politically in danger and what-not, and the consul—well, anyway, we got our visas and then from Marseilles we took the train again and we crossed Spain. Stopped in Madrid for about two days and then we went to Portugal.

LEVINE: And did you have—did you—you had a ticket. An actual ticket for the ship.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: All this actually was financed by the Jewish Labor Committee.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: We had no money, at all.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh, and that was because as Social Democrats you—

LODYJENSKY: Yes, that's right. The whole group was taken in.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Oh. So the ship that you left on was—what was the name? Say it again?

LODYJENSKY: Nyassa, N-Y-A-S-S-A.

LEVINE: Now, was this a—

LODYJENSKY: It was a Portuguese ship.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: A ship like any other.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: It took about nine days, which is a long time, but we got there without trouble. Some other people, you know, the German submarines was already, you know, trying, but they -- I don't think they ever attacked any—any neutral ships. Not Portuguese.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: But it was a little uncomfortable.

LEVINE: You were aware there were German submarines in the water.

LODYJENSKY: Yes, that's right.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and was there anything else about that trip, besides the possibility—

LODYJENSKY: No, the first day we left—well, you see, we were all tremendously depressed because my sister had just died. This was the tragedy of our life, you know. It was an accident, but it—well, it didn't make it any easier. But outside of that, no. We had a big—big storm as we left Lisbon and after that it was pretty peaceful.
[Laughs]

LEVINE: Oh. Wow. Well, I imagine your family was [unclear].

LODYJENSKY: [superposed] Well, we were down in the mouth. Certainly were. absolutely crushed. Crushed.

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah. Right.

LODYJENSKY: But anyway, we got to New York and then I started working.

LEVINE: Do you remember when the ship came in? Do you—do you remember that part?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, indeed I do. Yes, I remember.

LEVINE: Yes, what was—

LODYJENSKY: Passing—of course, the Verrazano Bridge wasn't built.

LEVINE: Right.

LODYJENSKY: But to see all this and the, you know, and—

LEVINE: But then you didn't go to Ellis Island. You went further up on one of the piers along Manhattan.

LODYJENSKY: We went to the pier and then we disembark and somebody pick—they took us the hotel on 12th Street and there we were. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Well, do—on your ship, did some people have to go to Ellis Island or—

LODYJENSKY: Well, my—one of my friends was with us, a friend of childhood, and she was traveling along because of a long story about her parents, who were following, and she was alone. So someone said, “What is this twenty-four year old beautiful blonde doing all alone?” So they were going to ship her to Ellis Island, but the Jewish Labor Committee came around and said, “No, no, we know her.”

LEVINE: Okay. Is there anything else about the Jewish Labor Union that—

LODYJENSKY: Oh, they gave us a lot of support until we settled down.

LEVINE: And what kinds of things were—were they doing as a general—

LODYJENSKY: Well, they gave us money.

LEVINE: Oh, money. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Not only us.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: I mean the whole—the whole group, until people settled down.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Oh, they did a tremendous job.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now were most of the people that were coming with you, were they Russians?

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So there weren't Jews that were also—

LODYJENSKY: No, they were all Russians Jews, actually.

LEVINE: Russian Jews.

LODYJENSKY: Most of them.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Except from this group, which held together since—since Russia. They have been in Berlin. Then they left because of Hitler and came to Paris and they stayed together, and eventually among this group of people, mostly the second generation, but also the first, at one time there were ten Professors of Columbia.

LEVINE: Wow. Wow.

LODYJENSKY: [Laughs] So there were writers, political writers and I mean people of a certain level of education.

LEVINE: Right. Education, right.

LODYJENSKY: So.

LEVINE: Wow.

LODYJENSKY: I'm very sorry because of the—

LEVINE: Let me just

LODYJENSKY: Am – am I?

LEVINE: [unclear] Let me make sure that I'm getting the good—

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: That's okay; you can lean back if you want to. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Would you like something to drink?

LEVINE: No. Well, we've got fifteen minutes on this tape.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: So let's just keep going, then we'll switch tapes.

LODYJENSKY: Anything you want.

LEVINE: So—so these were Russian Jews that—that people who were like your father who was not Jewish, but was a dissident.

LODYJENSKY: But was he was part of the—yes.

LEVINE: They were—they were a cohesive group.

LODYJENSKY: That's right.

LEVINE: Even in Russia before.

LODYJENSKY: Yes. They were part of the—how should I say? The committee which runs the Socialist Party.

LEVINE: Ah, okay. Yeah, yeah. And some of these people had already come to the United States, so that's how—

LODYJENSKY: Yes, there were some that arrived here, Mr. Menkoff [PH], and others who were here already settled and in communication with people like Dubinsky, who had been propagandized by my own [Laughs] father, among others. And who was the head of the union of the ladies garment.

LEVINE: I see. Were they mostly—the ones here in New York, were they mostly from Europe or were they—

LODYJENSKY: No, no, no, all Russian.

LEVINE: Some also from here. Oh, no, all Russian. Oh, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Well, I suppose there were some Americans among them.

LEVINE: Some Americans.

LODYJENSKY: But, you know, that they met, but the people who knew us were the ones that came from Russia.

LEVINE: Yeah. Wow. Uh-hmm. Okay, so when you first got here, you—you came right up—right up here?

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Right up to this part of the city and—

LODYJENSKY: Well, we disembarked downtown and then somebody took us to the hotel and there we were. It was up on 12th Street.

LEVINE: Oh, my goodness.

LODYJENSKY: Then eventually we moved into this apartment.

LEVINE: Wow. Wow.

LODYJENSKY: But—and then four months after we arrived—I didn't speak English, by the way. I had some high school English. I started working in a hospital. I wasn't a doctor. I didn't speak English, but they took me in and of course, in six months I was fluent and everybody was extraordinarily kind to me. I worked as a substitute intern. The funniest part is I started in September— [coughing]—and I was learning English and everything, as I went along, and I knew how to do injections. I mean, I was already quite trained. In December 7 there was Pearl Harbor. So everybody, the boys went to the army, the people who were there or got treatment. This was in Beekman Downtown Hospital and then at first it was like this. I would come to the directress of the hospital, Miss Davis, who was an English nurse. I said, "Well, can I stay a little longer or what?" "Yes, yes, we have still. ---- You can stay another two weeks," and then—and then there was Pearl Harbor and then "Oh, Dr. Lody, you are not going to leave us."

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Because, you know, everybody left. So I stayed in Beekman, oh, a good eighteen months in 1943. I finally got a—I had a work permit, which obtained for me immediately because when people, the Social Service of the Jewish Committee and whatnot. When they saw that I could get a job, well, they helped me all they could. But then I got my regular visa, my immigration visa and I was able to go to Canada to complete my studies. Then I came back a full-blown American physician, and then I did residencies and then I started practice. And this is where I needed to support my—my office. So that's how I got the job in Ellis Island because one of my co-students from France was working there and he said, "Well, you can take the part time job." He was full time, and that's how I got to Ellis Island, you see, to keep up my office going. [Laughs]

LEVINE: I see. Wow. So how long did you stay in—in Canada?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, actually nine months because it was an accelerated course and I was in the—they—they—I got all my French papers and they acknowledged—this was the French University of Montreal, not the English one.

LEVINE: Oh, in Montreal.

LODYJENSKY: So they accepted all my papers and this was accelerated course for during the war and I flew through it and came out with a [unclear].

LEVINE: So you actually completed your studies in French then?

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: In Montreal, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Wow. Wow. So—well, did you take—I mean how did you learn English so quickly? That's amazing for somebody—

LODYJENSKY: It's amazing what you do when you have to.

LEVINE: Have to.

LODYJENSKY: Besides, I was twenty-four, you know. I had a little Basic English because I had studied in school, but you know, having it twenty-four hours a day, it didn't take me any time at all.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Of course, I picked up the wrong kind of English because I was speaking and picking up all the—all the—

LEVINE: Slang?

LODYJENSKY: Slang. And then it had to be cleaned up eventually.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Well, can you say—you're probably one of the few people in the world who can compare what your medical education was like in France compared with Montreal, and then compared with working in a hospital here a short time.

LODYJENSKY: [superposed] Well, I'll tell you, there were some differences, but of course not fundamental. Montreal actually depended on France for inspiration and had been in the habit of sending their young men to Paris to get polished, you know, which was a mistake. After—during and after the war, they started sending them to the United States, which was much better because they were not terrible advanced in Montreal. I mean, you know, they were okay, but nothing extraordinary. But later on, they pulled themselves up tremendously because everybody had residencies in the States or in the English speaking part of Canada. So—but at that time Montreal was—it could have been, except the accent, been in Paris, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: From the medical point of view. As to working in the hospital, well, there wasn't that much difference. I mean I just went along, you know, and learning it as I was working.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So then after you had your degree, you decided you were going to do a private practice—

LODYJENSKY: That's right.

LEVINE: And that's when you took the—

LODYJENSKY: Well, first of all, I had to do my residencies.

LEVINE: Oh, right.

LODYJENSKY: And so I trained here in New York. Interestingly enough, in hospitals which have been disappeared since then.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: I'm really an historical monument, you know. [Laughs]

LEVINE: What were the hospitals that have disappeared?

LODYJENSKY: Well, there was—well, Beekman Downtown which now exists as—well, it's still Beekman, but three or four hospitals have been consolidated into one. Then I went to something which doesn't exist anymore, that's [unclear] Parker Hospital, which was the infectious diseases, which disappeared after penicillin came in.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Simply was no need for it. And then Seaview Hospital, which was a TB hospital in Staten Island and that was it, and then I went to the New York Infirmary for Women and Children which since then has been absorbed by Beth Israel.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: But this was a hospital which was staffed exclusively by women at the time, and I went there especially because this was—the war by that time was finished, and the men came back from—from the army and of course women at that time had to be put aside.

LEVINE: Right. Right.

LODYJENSKY: So that this is they --- I worked there and I worked there for twenty years from a resident to chief of service when I quit.

LEVINE: Oh, wow. That was Beekman?

LODYJENSKY: No, that was New York Infirmary.

LEVINE: New York Infirmary, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: It has disappeared since. It has been pre-empted by Beth Israel.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, now, when the men came back from the war, did that—did that—

LODYJENSKY: That was—

LEVINE: Hurt your career? I mean, as far as—

LODYJENSKY: Well, I had more trouble getting a good residency because the men—well, they had priority, having been in the army. That was only fair.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: But anyway, I completed my—my training and then I started practicing in 1948 and I did this and that and I tried—I worked for the Health Department or whatever, and then I got this job at Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Well, now, was your mother able to practice medicine?

LODYJENSKY: No.

LEVINE: No.

LODYJENSKY: Oh, at that time she—she was—

LEVINE: Oh, she was older.

LODYJENSKY: She had been too far away from it.

LEVINE: Ah. Oh, right, because she didn't do it in—in Paris.

LODYJENSKY: No, no.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Right. So actually you—you, your mother and your father moved to this apartment.

LODYJENSKY: That's right.

LEVINE: At 113th Street, I should say, and Amsterdam. Now, but you were the only one working.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: After you came to this country.

LODYJENSKY: Well, my father had a little job. He was working for a small paper.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. But you were really the main—the main one.

LODYJENSKY: Well, between us we managed.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, let's see. I'm trying to think if there's anything else. We'll start the next tape with the Ellis Island part.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: But you mentioned—when did you become a citizen?

LODYJENSKY: Well, in 1948.

LEVINE: And how—and—

LODYJENSKY: I just—before the election and I was desolate because I was going to vote for Truman, but I wasn't allowed that year to vote. But I had been voting ever since.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. So—and how did Ellis Island figure into that?

LODYJENSKY: Well, as I say, I needed this just to keep my office going, one way or the other, and—

LEVINE: No, but I mean the—

LODYJENSKY: [superposed] I needed the salary.

LEVINE: I mean the citizenship part. The citizen—

LODYJENSKY: Oh, no. Once I was a citizen, in 1948. I didn't get my citizenship at Ellis Island. That's not where it was done.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: It was done some place on Manhattan, but I was examined by a physician there.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Because, well, part of the process, you know. So it was very funny because while I was quite young, and he put his stethoscope in one spot and then another. Then he looked at me and he said, "Well, you don't have any marks." I said, "Do you see any?" And then there was this young punks, his associate, who came along, looked at me very carefully and says, "She has a scar on her nose." Now, this has disappeared, but that was true. I had a small scar on my nose. I was ready to kill him, because this got into my papers. [Laughs]

LEVINE: [Laughs] Oh, no.

LODYJENSKY: And the older man said, "Well, I didn't want to say it." [Laughs]

LEVINE: So that was the—so—so this was a physical exam.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Connected with getting your citizenship?

LODYJENSKY: That's right.

LEVINE: Oh, I never—

LODYJENSKY: Everybody had it.

LEVINE: I didn't—uh-huh. So did—but you took a test? You know, the President and the—

LODYJENSKY: Well, I probably—probably had to have an x-ray, I suppose. I don't remember exactly. Maybe I did [unclear], maybe not, but anyway, it was a physical examination. One a stethoscope here, one stethoscope there and that was it.

LEVINE: That was it. [Laughs]

LODYJENSKY: Well, I was obviously very healthy. [Laughs]

LEVINE: And what about questions, about the government and the country and—

LODYJENSKY: Oh, well, that is not done there, but yes, we had to pass an examination to prove that we knew English. So there was a small examination like "Baseball is the favorite game in—in the United States. Which is the favorite game in the United States?"

LEVINE: Oh. Did they ask you like, you know, how many—

LODYJENSKY: And then I think—yes, they asked a few questions of you. I had to swear not to take arms against the government. I promised.
[Laughs]

LEVINE: So. So then—so then you—you came—from Ellis Island you came back to Manhattan some place and got your—

LODYJENSKY: Well, I—at one point I had to go to Canada to immigrate again. See, that was in the beginning of this process. To get a permanent visa, I had to leave the country. So I took a trip to Montreal, I said hello to the Consul and I came back. That was even before I went there as a—as a student. But and then five years later, when I was able to get my citizenship, I didn't have to do that. But I just got my papers. My parents did it, too, but much later.

LEVINE: Oh, but they became citizens?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, did they—did they really—did they really want to do that? I mean, was it something important to them like?

LODYJENSKY: Yes, they did.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Why not?

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-hmm. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: We were stateless until then.

LEVINE: Right. Right. Did your mother and father hold on to their—to their ways of—their Russian ways much or—

LODYJENSKY: No, they—they—I don't know what you mean by Russian ways.

LEVINE: Customs.

LODYJENSKY: They were extremely liberal and well educated people. I mean, you know, yes, we drank tea. [Laughs] But then my mother always made a holiday for Easter because of the—she cooked all the cakes and what goes with it, but that was, you know, not really anything terribly deep. The thing is, we spoke Russian among ourselves, which kept my language and my father spoke it with a great deal of elegance. And the funniest part, recently, two, three years ago, I met some people from Moscow and they sat and they spoke Russian. “You know, it's so charming to hear you. You speak such a pleasant old-fashioned Russian.” I said, “Ohhhh.” [Laughs]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay. Well, I think we're going to stop here. It's the end of this tape.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: And we'll take a little break and start another. Okay.

[END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1] [BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2]

LODYJENSKY: --was there for years. Hundred to hundred, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, in Siberia.

LODYJENSKY: It's not that—there were Cossacks that were incorporated in the army and used as Tsarist guards and police and so on, but that was of a different—oh, shut up. Different times, you know. Excuse me.

LEVINE: Yeah. [Laughs] I see.

LODYJENSKY: But they migrated through the years because Siberia was populated by the Russians, well from the 16th to the 17th century. Before that it was the Mongols or whatever native tribes that were there.

LEVINE: Right.

LODYJENSKY: And then the Russian people infiltrated little by little and conquered the natives and established themselves.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: As farmers or whatever.

LEVINE: But most of them were really what—what was called peasants. Isn't—is that—

LODYJENSKY: Yes. Yeah.

LEVINE: So they were working on—

LODYJENSKY: On the land.

LEVINE: A larger farm that was someone else's.

LODYJENSKY: Yes. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah, right. Right.

LODYJENSKY: No, you see, there were plenty of land, so I suppose the same system as—how do you call that in America? When people came and occupied land?

LEVINE: Oh, like a squatter?

LODYJENSKY: No, not squatters, no. Land—land—it was official. They gave—

LEVINE: Oh, they were given land.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: To populate certain areas.

LODYJENSKY: Yes, to populate the country.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see. Yeah. Okay, well, all right. So now we're talking about you had finished your medical degree and you wanted to start a private practice and a colleague from the University in Paris—

LODYJENSKY: Yes, who was already employed at—

LEVINE: At Ellis.

LODYJENSKY: Ellis Island. Dr. Joseph Rogoff. He was a full time officer, and so he introduced me to Dr. Ginsberg, who was the director of the hospital who was a very delightful person. He was kind. He was so interested in the immigrants that he had to take care of because, you know, I don't have to tell you that there was a hospital, but there was the big place where the detainees were kept. And so I was introduced to Dr. Ginsberg and I worked four hours and eventually because I was part time or for whatever reason, it was convenient, they gave me the little clinic that was run for the benefit of the people who were the detainees, who had whatever miseries they had, you know. And they came to see me and here I was, you know, taking care of them, and I had one assistant. Now, there's something people forget about Ellis Island that this was actually a hospital for the Coast Guard.

LEVINE: Called the Marine Hospital, I believe.

LODYJENSKY: Whatever it was called, the Coast Guards were hospitalized there and they were treated, and then there were the houses where the personnel lived and then in the same hospital where we treated the Coast Guards, which wasn't all that much because those were healthy guys, you know, were the detainees [unclear] there whenever they were sick enough to need the hospital. And so Dr. Ginsberg was extremely with the detainees. You know, he was trying to facilitate everything for them. Now, the big question—this was the time where the people from the post war period who had been in camps in Europe were given visas and came to America and then they were sorted out, you know, and some of them were detained. And human nature being what it is, you

know, for instance, I know among the Russians some people would get there to Ellis Island and somebody from Germany would write, "He is a such and so and did this and that."

LEVINE: Oh, uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Human nature, and there was a social service, which was devoted to help the detainees. Are you aware of that?

LEVINE: Yes.

LODYJENSKY: Well, I'm sure you are.

LEVINE: Well, yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah. So—

LEVINE: Now, when you say—you're not—there were detainees who were immigrants who were being held.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Then during the war—oh, no, so but this is after the war. When they had the so-called enemy aliens—

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Were being also detained or interned, I guess.

LODYJENSKY: Well, that was during the war.

LEVINE: That was—that was not when—

LODYJENSKY: But that was a different period.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Those were people who had been in displaced persons' camps in Europe.

LEVINE: Right.

LODYJENSKY: A good many were Russians and then they were all kinds, and— and then there were people who were detained coming from Asia for one reason or another. So the—the crowd that was detained was extremely variant, except that there were a good many Europeans at that time because this was the time for all this detainee camps. Displaced person camps, the camps were being liquidated.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: So people were sorted out in Germany or wherever they were and then they came around here. Either something was wrong with an x-ray, because the great thing was to avoid tuberculosis and so, for instance, there was an x-ray which looked a little bit not—not right, so they had to be checked to see. Get sputum cultures to see that they were not contagious and that they didn't have an acute illness. Then whatever might happen, or they were detained for political reasons because their papers were not in order, or the little presents that their dear friends did. So all this was like that. So when they were really sick, they went to the

hospital. Otherwise, they came to my little clinic and I could give them whatever they need, you know. Cough mixtures or what have you. Also, the funniest part of it, when the Coast Guards misbehaved and they were arrested and they were put on Ellis Island. And then the next day, I had to check them, once they had—they were over their, you know, drunken whatever they were.

LEVINE: Oh, curfews. They didn't come in.

LODYJENSKY: And I remember—I remember the first time I had that, there was twenty guys standing there and here I come. Now, you tell me I look younger, but then I looked really young.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: And I'm not very big, and I come here and I see twenty guys. So, you know, they started snickering. "Ha, ha, ha, ha." Well, actually my assistant was supposed to do—to check them for venereal diseases, which he did in a little corner. I didn't have to do it myself, but once I realized that, I said, "That's it. I am going to see you one by one and then you're going to behave yourself, you can be sure." But when they are in a group, of course. [Coughs] So that was one of my experiences.

LEVINE: Huh. I know they had a little brig there. It was a little prison, jail.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: That they—

LODYJENSKY: Oh, well, they were—they were not with the immigrants.

LEVINE: No.

LODYJENSKY: No, no. They were—they had their own facilities.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: So—

LEVINE: Were you aware of any Merchant Marines that were hospitalized on Ellis Island at that time? Because they were put in the hospital there to--

LODYJENSKY: I think the Merchant Marines were most in Beekman Hospital.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah, because when I was a resident there, we had plenty of Merchant Marines.

LEVINE: Oh, really?

LODYJENSKY: And they were there.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: They were—I don't think they were put on Ellis Island. They were in either Beekman or another hospital, or Bellevue, but not—not—not Ellis Island.

LEVINE: So when you worked for the US Public Health Service at Ellis Island, you were not yet a citizen.

LODYJENSKY: Yes, I was.

LEVINE: Oh, you was a—you were a citizen.

LODYJENSKY: I became a citizen 40—I couldn't have been.

LEVINE: That's why I was questioning it.

LODYJENSKY: No, I became a citizen '48 and this was a few years later.

LEVINE: Oh, '53 or '54.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-hmm. Not very much, but—[Laughs]

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So—so when you mentioned on your questionnaire here that you took—there was a—there was a ferry every hour or so.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Now, is that the same ferry that immigrants came—took?

LODYJENSKY: That was the only one.

LEVINE: It was the only one. See, like now we have a staff boat and then there is the Circle Line.

LODYJENSKY: As far as I know, that was the only one.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see. So—and were certain staff members living out there at that time?

LODYJENSKY: Yes. Uh-hmm. They were—I remember, yes, quite a few. They had all these houses which are more or less demolished now. You know, there was the big house which has been re—

LEVINE: Restored. Re-

LODYJENSKY: Restored, yes. The hospital, I don't know what they did with it. It was like this and behind that there were brick houses where people lived. I remember in particular one psychiatrist which was our psychiatrist but also he was for the—for the Coast Guards or whatever, you know, and he lived there with his family. And—

LEVINE: Do you remember his name, by any chance?

LODYJENSKY: No, I don't remember.

LEVINE: His name? Uh-huh. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Absolutely not, but he was—he had a young family and one of the fellows who did—there was also people who were—there was a part of the hospital which was mental, and one of the fellows who was in the mental hospital, an American, used to take care of the little boy of this—which was stupid.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Finally, they—the doctor and everybody became very—they had cabin fever, if I can put it that way. They were all—oh, oh, oh, depressed. I said, “Look doctor. You’re the psychiatrist. Get off the island, but take a good vacation,” which he did. He did. It didn’t help much, though.

LEVINE: Oh, that’s so funny. Well, you know, that’s interesting because we have in our collection—I didn’t do it, but an interview with the—with the man who was that little boy.

LODYJENSKY: Yes?

LEVINE: And he talks about the patient who [unclear] take care of him.

LODYJENSKY: What did become of him?

LEVINE: Gee. I don’t know what his occupation was. As I say, I didn’t conduct the interview, but I know it’s in the collection, and he talks about having a—this mental patient take care of him.

LODYJENSKY: Yes. Yeah, yeah. [Laughs] Which was a very stupid thing to do.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: But the doctor later on said—he was a young fellow. He said, “Well, you know, you were right.” [Laughs] That’s what we needed is a [unclear].

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. I just lost what I was going to say.

LODYJENSKY: So—

LEVINE: Psychiatry. Let me just ask you a question about that. I know they experimented with electro shock treatment at Ellis Island early on when it was first—when they first—

LODYJENSKY: I was not aware of that.

LEVINE: That was before—maybe before your time.

LODYJENSKY: Well, I simply—it wasn't in my—

LEVINE: Duties or whatever.

LODYJENSKY: Duty. I mean and certainly not in the hospital, that I know of. I did not come across that.

LEVINE: Do you remember what was done? Did you work with the mentally—

LODYJENSKY: No. No, no. I worked with the detainees and whoever was hospitalized.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And there I can tell you a few stories if you want.

LEVINE: Good. Yes.

LODYJENSKY: First there was my little clinic and one of the anecdotes, if you will, here was this fellow who was detained. He had a young family, two small children and his wife. And all of a sudden comes a

denunciation that he was—had been a guard in a camp in—in a concentration camp in Estonia. Well, he had—I had seen him for this and that, you know. We spoke Russian, everything was fine, and all of a sudden here he comes, completely catastrophic, you know, because he's denounced. His wife immediately threw him over and I don't know what eventually happened to him, but he comes and I said to him "But, look, what did you actually do?" And he said, "Doctor, are you speaking to me as a friend or as an employee of the government." Said, "Excuse me, I'm an employee of the government, don't tell me anything."

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: You know, I didn't want to—to get into this. Another story was, you know, you probably heard about that. There was those people from Estonia or Lithuania who came by sh — by yacht. They had a sailboat and they crossed the Atlantic. There were two or three groups who did that. Those were people who were fleeing at that time from the Soviets. So they were the upper bourgeoisies, I would say. One of them I remember was a young lady who was extremely arrogant, but they had been tremendously courageous to do that and, you know, there had been doubts about whether they would be allowed to—to land because at that time there were very strict immigration laws. But anyway, they—they were all settled down eventually. Among them was a couple. He had been a physician and she was, well, his wife and a lady and she had a tremendous case of emphysema and she needed—she coughed and she needed a great deal of codeine to keep her down, you know, and she was hospitalized. Then eventually they were freed, and I spoke Russian to them and one day she told me, "Well, you see, here I

am imprisoned and my husband had to do that for the Germans. He had to put people in camps," you know. I felt funny.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: And at that time I was much more rigid than I would be now, but—because, you know, with age I mellowed. But at that time I was—so finally they were released and then they were in my office and the gentleman comes and says, "Doctor, I want you to help me because my wife, we are settled in Queens," or some place, "but she needs codeine, and I would like to write a prescription." I said, "I'm sorry. I am a pediatrician. Excuse me. Goodbye," which was not very kind of me. On the other hand, I didn't want to get involved in a case of drug addiction, actually.

LEVINE: Right. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: But I don't know whether I would have done the same thing now, but at that time, I was very—this is right, this is wrong.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Then there was one charming story about a Chinese lady who had yaws. Yaws is a form of syphilis which is prevalent -- dominant in the Orient, and here she comes with a positive test, and she is a grandmother. Not a word of English and here she is and she's supposed to get ten shots of penicillin, one a day. And here she is, poor soul. So we developed a language. She obviously wanted to know when she goes to the mainland, so I said, "Mainlands," I showed Manhattan.

LEVINE: Pointed, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: And then I showed her, well—

LEVINE: One, two on your fingers. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: And every day we did that and we were the best of friends.
[Laughs] I showed it on my fingers, how many days she had left.
Well, she finally went to the mainland and she was freed.

LEVINE: So did the penicillin actually cure that?

LODYJENSKY: Huh?

LEVINE: The penicillin took care of it?

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah, that was the good old days.

LEVINE: Wow.

LODYJENSKY: When penicillin was effective.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Then there were—oh, there was a Rabbi and his little boy,
Yankele, I think his name was. Dr. Ginsberg and I, we fell in love
with him. He was a seven year old. He was adorable, you know.

The Rabbi had six and a half children because he came with six and he had sent his wife first, so that she could deliver on American soil to have an American child, which of course would facilitate his staying in America.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: And the good lady did eventually deliver, but there was this Yankele and he was absolutely adorable. I mean we couldn't—I couldn't talk to him. I don't remember whether Dr. Ginsberg knew any Yiddish. I doubt it very much, but anyway, here we were adoring Yankele. And—what else was I—oh, there was an Indian. At that time smallpox was pretty much eradicated in Europe, but it was still quite prevalent in Mexico and in—in India. And here is this gentleman who comes on a ship—no, by plane and he had been vaccinated three days ago and, you know, small pox, you don't know probably, but perhaps you do. Incubates for seven days. So we had to detain him. So we put him in the hospital in a private room, which is very, very ugly, you know. It was an empty—the room was nothing on the walls. There was a clean bed and a window, and he was there, and all of a sudden—he was a lawyer. Spoke beautiful English, of course, and he was so enthusiastic. He said, "You know, I had such a bad reputation for Ellis Island. We were all so afraid, and here I am treated wonderfully and I'm going to tell everybody not to be afraid." [Laughs] It's all a matter of comparison, you know. Absolutely enthusiastic.

LEVINE: [Laughs] Yeah. Huh.

LODYJENSKY: But again, with Dr. Ginsberg [coughs] there was a matter of interpreting the x-rays, you know. So we took one x-ray and then another one six months later. [Coughs] And if there was the slightest chance, you know, on the good, of course, Dr. Ginsberg was very, very good about interpreting it. I don't know whether you have any memories about him because—

LEVINE: No, I'm not familiar with him. Now, he was what? He was the head physician here?

LODYJENSKY: He was the chief of the hospital.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did he then live at the—live on Ellis Island?

LODYJENSKY: I'm sorry?

LEVINE: Did he live on Ellis Island?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, no, no, no. He had a house somewhere in Westchester County, which he was with land, and he adored it. He always talked about his—his excellent—what was it? Chappaqua. He was devoted to his home, and so when very brutally Ellis Island closed, because they started painting the hospital in October and they closed it in November.

LEVINE: When you say very brutally, you mean you—you didn't have forewarning?

LODYJENSKY: We had no inkling. Boom. The whole thing closed.

LEVINE: And did you know—did anybody—

LODYJENSKY: I didn't know anything.

LEVINE: Ever tell you afterwards what had happened?

LODYJENSKY: Well, you see, I didn't care so much because I was part time. So actually I—thanks to the same Joe Rogoff, as a matter of fact, I joined the HIP, H-I-P, for which I worked forty years. First part time, then full time. But—so I resettled, but Ginsberg and all the other career officers, had—well, here they were. So they had to go to San Francisco. I don't know where.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: So I remember Dr. Ginsberg was absolutely heart broken because of his house in Chappaqua, you know. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Right.

LODYJENSKY: That was really very brutal.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: And at that time I told myself, "Well, if you can't depend on the government, I'm not going to work for it." [Laughs] Any organization like that.

LEVINE: [Laughs] Yeah. How about the physical look of Ellis Island? Was it—was it well planted? Was it an attractive place?

LODYJENSKY: No.

LEVINE: No, uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: You see, the big house was the way it is now except that it was less well kept. I know there was one little spot where people went to sunsh— sun bathe. You know, the big house and then Manhattan and then in between there is a little bit of land, rocks.

LEVINE: Yes.

LODYJENSKY: Really, where people went to sun bathe. There were some trees, but actually I didn't go very much beyond the hospital. I just didn't have the time.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Incidentally, there was the food. We, the physicians—and I usually took my lunch there—had very good food. It was tasty. It was good, but the poor immigrants; they had a problem because the food was too salty and too peppery. And then I went to fight with the—the man who was in charge of the kitchen. Was a nice young man and I said, "Look, it's all very well, but this is too—too—too salty, too peppery and it's no good for the children. I think the children should have a separate table where things are mild and they can eat." Believe you me, he did—he did install a children's table, wherever they were. So a good many people asked, "Well, couldn't we go to the children's?" You'll probably also know that there was a special kitchen which was kosher.

LEVINE: Kosher, uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: But that was a private organization that organized that.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And—but he was a government man and he did organize the kitchen so that the children could have it—he said, “Look, doctor, I get people from the most luxurious ships, and I get people who are workers or—and they may be Orientals who are used to this and then people from that country are used to that. So I don’t know. I do it a sort of in between.” The food was healthy, except that naturally no institution food, you know, after the two or three days you can tolerate it because it becomes monotonous, ----- the same. God knows, I have eaten in hospitals and again it’s pretty [unclear].

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: So that was one of the problems. What else can I tell you?
[Pause] ----- Well, the physicians there. There was Dr. Joe Rogoff, who was French trained.

LEVINE: And he’s the one you knew.

LODYJENSKY: There was—huh?

LEVINE: He’s the one you knew from before?

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Then there was a Dr. Simms, who—she was an American girl who had married a policeman, and she put him through medical school by working as a full time officer in Ellis Island. And he became—this policeman, he finished medical school after he was thirty, and became a well known psychiatrist because I remember attending lectures that he gave.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: He was a big, you know, a big guy, very solid and spoke Brooklynese, rather than Manhattanese, but he was a very good psychiatrist, you know, and he worked—worked in Manhattan.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: And so that was interesting because she put him through medical school.

LEVINE: Now, was she also a physician?

LODYJENSKY: She was a physician, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: She had put herself through medical school.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: By working as a waitress and so on and so forth, and then she put her husband through. So that was interesting. Who else was there? There was one fellow who was German. He had to go to

San Francisco, poor devil, because again he was left without a job. Otherwise, I mean, they were all relocated, but they didn't have a choice. Of course, I stayed here and Joe Rogoff, also. I don't remember what he did. He probably found another job. He didn't have too—too much interest in clinical medicine.

LEVINE: And Dr. Ginsberg, did he—

LODYJENSKY: Dr. Ginsberg, I lost track of him.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Because, you know, he went to San Francisco then. I don't know. But he was a very, very good physician and a very nice person. He really was interested, and then there was a social service who really tried to help the detainees, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And of course the detainees were all kinds and there was one family, the grandmother, the daughter and the granddaughter, Russian, who had been immigrants to—from Russian to Yugoslavia and I think the daughter was even born there, and the granddaughter. There were three very handsome women and the grandmother became ill and I had her in the hospital. So, you know, we communicated and I gave her moral support and so on, but somebody had denounced the daughter for whatever, you know. Some cooperation with the Germans, I don't know. Anyway, she really fought that and finally even the local church interfered and everybody came and said, "No, no, this is all

wrong. She is a good girl and we can give her a good character," and then they—they left.

[END OF SIDE A, TAPE 2]

[BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 2]

LODYJENSKY: And they lived in America and the daughter married an American and lived in Florida until quite recently, I think.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: So then the daughter got married, of course, too. So they did well, but they had a good difficult time, you know. So there was—but there were people fighting.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: You see, this was—after all, this is America and people were independent and I thought that this idea of the social service was—[Laughs]—the government needs a social service to----- to fight themselves. I think that was very comical.

LEVINE: [Laughs] Well, did you ever—did you know of any people who had been detained there for a very long period of time?

LODYJENSKY: Um, very long perhaps not, but months, certainly. There was one unfortunate person which we couldn't protect. She had tuberculosis and there was no way of hiding it, you know, and the poor devil was sent back to Sweden. I don't know what happened

to her. This was a time where actually—well, the drugs for tuberculosis just emerged.

LEVINE: Ah.

LODYJENSKY: I don't even know whether we had them in hand at that time because that was in the early '50s and so I don't know. But anyway, I know that this poor lady was sent back to Sweden. Then there were people who were detained, but then eventually they were whatever, either sent back or I don't know what they did with them. Most of them were freed, actually.

LEVINE: Well, I noticed like on what they call Island Three, the furthest one, closest to the Statue of Liberty.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: The—the buildings were built around a little kind of courtyard where—so people could go and have fresh air.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: But that was really one of the only treatments for TB at that time, wasn't it? To get fresh air and—

LODYJENSKY: That's right, rest and fresh air.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. So some people did get rest and fresh air and then they were released into this country?

LODYJENSKY: Well, no, because if within six weeks we couldn't show that they were not contagious, then they were—had to be sent back because the idea was not to import tuberculosis. Before this time, when the immigration was either from less developed countries, there was a question of the eyes, but that to me was history more than actual thing because there was trachoma, the eye infection. But at that time, that wasn't a problem.

LEVINE: You know, it's funny because a few people I've interviewed said they had trachoma. They were diagnosed with trachoma and they said they got it—they got it taken care of and then they were released.

LODYJENSKY: Oh, well, because—well, they probably had—well, there probably was treated with sulfur or penicillin at that time.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Oh, yes, there was one incident which was unpleasant. There was one family who was detained quite a while. It wasn't the daughter of the guard, but it was somebody else, and this child had one sore throat after the other, one sore throat after the other, both tonsils meeting the middle, with all the puss. Gave her penicillin and then she—so she really needed her tonsils out and there was a surgeon who was connected with Ellis Island and was supposed to do the—remove the tonsils. And he wouldn't, and I called him up and I said, "Look, here is a case which really is clear cut indication. You have to do it." "I don't have to do it. I cannot put a little immigrant child in front of the—of the American children." That was the only time in America where I really got

against this kind of psychology, you know, [unclear], and I couldn't do a thing.

LEVINE: Hmm. Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: I yelled and I screamed, but—

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Finally, she probably was released and got better anyway, or got her tonsils out somewhere else, but the thing is this. That is really the first—only time of overt discrimination. The kid was white and blonde and blue eyed, but that's not the point.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, but this physician, was he working apart from—

LODYJENSKY: No, he wasn't working. He was on a contract.

LEVINE: Ah, I see. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So you didn't—you never—that's the only time you ran into sort of native American prejudice towards—

LODYJENSKY: Yes. Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Well, probably not the only time, but the only time it was overt.
[Laughs]

LEVINE: Yeah, overt. Uh-huh. Yeah, yeah. Right, right. Well, when you look back on it now, how do you feel—how do you think about that period of time, that year and a half—

LODYJENSKY: Well, that was a lot of fun. I enjoyed it and the company was pleasant and whatever I did, you know, I could help some people and give them a little moral support and I think probably the émigrés felt less strange with me than they would have with a born American because, you know, I was one of their own.
[Laughs]

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: I'm not necessarily speaking about the Russians. I mean everybody, you know.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: I wasn't all that American.

LEVINE: Right, and it sounds from what you're saying—it sounds as though the people who worked there really did have the interests of—of the—of the immigrants at heart and were good to them.

LODYJENSKY: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

LEVINE: Well, that's good to know.

LODYJENSKY: No, they were—they were—there were no hostility and whatever could be done was done.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: I mean certainly Dr. Ginsberg was very kind and in the hospital everybody was treated normally, you know, like you would in a hospital. There was no—no discrimination at all. I mean they were sick, and they were sick and that was it, and whatever we could we did.

LEVINE: And were there other people who had immigrated working in the hospitals, like nurse's aides or orderlies or nurses or—that you remember?

LODYJENSKY: No, I don't remember very well because I made rounds, but I was much more—I wasn't all that connected.

LEVINE: [unclear] Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Yes, I made rounds and I had my patients and—but I don't remember who the adjunct personnel was at that time. I don't think it was as much as is now, when we have so many people who come from four corners of the world. I think it wasn't striking.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. And how about this neighborhood that you were living in when you worked there? What—what was the composition like here?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, the demography has changed a lot. This was a nice, bourgeois Jewish middle class.

LEVINE: Oh. [Laughs] I see.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, it must have been dominated by Columbia, though. No?

LODYJENSKY: Columbia, yes, but now Columbia is all colors and creeds, you know, and we have a lot of people who are—whatever they are, I don't know what is the politically correct word now about Orientals. Whether you say Orientals or Asiatics, but one of them. Certainly we see a lot of people who are connected with Columbia. There are some Spanish. They—you name them.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: But you know, for instance, in the good old times when first we came here, for Yom Kippur—Yom Kippur, the neighborhood was dead, you know.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: No, you can't even find a good—good Jewish bread or whatever.

LEVINE: Great. Great ---Great. Well, now, were—were immigrants in this neighborhood? Were they part of the bourgeois or they were—these were more people who had been here.

LODYJENSKY: No, no, this was people who were settled. Of course, we were the immigrants because all our group started living around here.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: At first we lived in a residential hotel, which now is the Post Office on 112th Street, and then we moved here and we stayed.

LEVINE: And you stayed. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow. Wow. Ah, let's see; is there anything else that I can—how about the buildings at Ellis Island, were they in good shape towards the end? Or were they beginning to show wear and--

LODYJENSKY: No, they weren't good.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. Okay. [Pause] Okay, well, how do you think—having come here at a—as a young woman, how do you think your experience prior to coming here, like St. Petersburg and then in France and then your whole having to go through Lisbon, do you think that made a difference in your personality? The way that you approach things or the way that you think about things? Do you—do you—could you say anything about the impact of your early experience?

LODYJENSKY: I'll tell you what. I think I was God damned heal ---lucky.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Because when I came to America. I mean, in France I got my education, my cultural background, my attachment to France, all this was true. But I was a foreigner and there was discrimination which was subtle, but it was there. I was a "*metek*" [PH]. *Metek* is a Greek word for foreigner.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: [Laughs] But it's insulting in French.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: But in here, first of all, I was not a *metek* -- than anybody else, you know. Then I was extraordinarily lucky to get that job as soon as I came to America and all the way through, I managed very well, I mean, as far as I'm concerned, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: As far as settling down. There was a moment when I had thought about joining the United Nations organization for the displaced persons and all that, but then I realized I'm not a good administrator, and then again I will find myself in all this—I'm staying in New York. I have had patients from all over the world. From—from HIP, I have had embassies and in particular from—from Jerusalem. From Israel and other places and I have had Zulus from Madagascar, from Australia—not native to it. People from Australia and then you name it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And, of course, whatever is in New York. So that has always been very interesting. So I really cannot complain about anything. I mean, I think I did very well.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: As I say, I was lucky.

LEVINE: Yeah. And I—I suppose you had a certain empathy, too, to people coming here from elsewhere.

LODYJENSKY: Well, yes! I mean—I have no prejudices.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: You know, I can take them the way they are.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: So—[Laughs]

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: So, that's it.

LEVINE: Do you think of yourself as Russian? I mean—

LODYJENSKY: In a strange way, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Actually, I spent eight years of my life in Russia, but that's all, but still basically I am a Russian, but from a Russ ---a Russian which doesn't exist and perhaps never has.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Because, you see, thanks to the very high level of culture of my parents, their very broad attitude toward humanity, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: So, as—and I don't know how many Russians there were like that. There was a Russian intellectual class, but it wasn't big, you know. So what kind of Russian I am, I don't know, but I still think that basically somewhere I am. But it has been, sort of—how should I say? mixed up with France and of course America.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: But New York itself is not America, in a way. That's what people tell you. [Laughs] But whatever it is.

LEVINE: Yeah, you're a New Yorker, but you're a Russian. [Laughs] Well, how about your mother and father, did they—do you think they were—I mean—

LODYJENSKY: Well, they were Russian; there is no question about it, I mean.

LEVINE: Yeah. Were they—were they happy to have settled here?

LODYJENSKY: Yes. In as much as happiness was possible for them after the loss of my sister. If she hadn't died, we would have a very nice life, but that was a big tragedy.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: So, outside of that, they were—they were quite—I heard them laughing in the kitchen there.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: You see, this contains also the biography of Dr. Haas, the one that I sp —spoke — I --- my mother always talk about him. “Dr. Haas, Dr. Haas.” Finally, I went to Columbia University and I got the Russian encyclopedia and here was my Dr. Haas, with his biography.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: So I translated. I mean I concentrated it a bit and I put it in there because he was a very interesting person. If you care to read it, I think you will enjoy it.

LEVINE: Yeah, I'd like to. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: And this is the -- a pamphlet that a friend of mine sent me from Paris. This is in English, about the University of Tartu, which at that time was called something else in Estonia and gives a history of this—of this university.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. So this is—

LODYJENSKY: So there is a lot of information there.

LEVINE: Okay.

LODYJENSKY: And this is one of the last photos of my sister.

LEVINE: Oh. Hmm. Oh, I'm sure that her death had a big impact on you, as well as your mother and father. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Well, as I remember telling myself when she died, well, there are people who live without a leg or without an arm, and I just have to do that.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Oh. That's lovely, yeah. So all of this then is contained in this book that we're going to have on file.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: At Ellis Island.

LODYJENSKY: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, is there anything else that you can think of that maybe we—we didn't cover or we covered too quickly?

LODYJENSKY: Well, I don't know. We spoke about the kitchen. We spoke about the relationship between the medical corps and actually even the kitchen and the social service. And the people were unhappy because the moment you put people into jai—into containment, you know, you're wrong. But they were not mistreated, as far as I know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Certainly. I don't think there was any abuse, at the times when I was there.

LEVINE: Well, I don't know, but if they were getting good medical care, that was maybe more than they had gotten before.

LODYJENSKY: It was one family, a very simple person who was Russian but uneducated, and they had been displaced persons and apparently had a hard time. And they came to Ellis Island with two kids and before you knew it, those kids gained weight. [Laughs] They become good, solid kids and the man said, "You know, this is wonderful. We are so well fed."

LEVINE: [Laughs] Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Apparently, they have had a hard time, you know, before that.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Those were not educated people who perhaps didn't have the—the same way of, you know, getting ahead of themselves.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: As other people did. This is my father's family.

LEVINE: Oh, these are all photos in this book.

LODYJENSKY: And this is—

LEVINE: OH.

LODYJENSKY: His sister that came after him. She was a doctor. This one was a biologist. My uncle was a --- student uniform? No, he was in the—in the army, and his twin sister, and those two got to France, even before the First World War and my aunt married a French man and there are quite a few descendants of her, which are my cousins. My uncle also had three children and—and now there are grandchildren and whatnot. So.

LEVINE: Well, you certainly have an interesting history and an interesting life and—

LODYJENSKY: [Laughs] Yeah. This is a picture I got from a tourist book. This is the big lake, which is in Siberia, the biggest lake in—

LEVINE: Oh, I've read about that lake. Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: [unclear] just, of course, in the summer.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Yeah, right.

LODYJENSKY: In the winter, it's—and here's our trip to Siberia there.

LEVINE: So you went there with your mother and father?

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LODYJENSKY: Not my father. My father was abroad already. With my mother to visit her family.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And that's when I meant—those are views of Irkutsk. Some are modern, some are not. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Hmm. Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: This—this --- I—this city is three hundred years old. That's all.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: That's when Siberia—those are pictures I got from, again, those are natives of Siberia.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Also, that's a map. This is a map I got from a friend of mine who is a Frenchman, French scholar and he went to Siberia as a French scholar and he found me a map of that region, of Irkutsk. And here is the village of my mother.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And this is where her cousins lived. This is a big city.

LEVINE: Oh, that must ----.

LODYJENSKY: Oh, if you have time—

LEVINE: Yes, I would love to.

LODYJENSKY: I hope you enjoy it.

LEVINE: I—thank you. I guess your mother really; it was meaningful to go back and to see it, huh? When you went with her?

LODYJENSKY: In '23, yes.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: Well, that's the last time she saw her family.

LEVINE: Hmm. Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: She visited Prague. This picture, which is taken, was there with her sister. She was able to go to Prague before her sister—when her sister was all right yet. She died a few years later.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LODYJENSKY: This was in '29, I think.

LEVINE: Hmm. Okay. Okay. Well, is there anything else you'd like to say before we close?

LODYJENSKY: Well, I don't know. Is there anything I can tell you?

LEVINE: You know, I was—I didn't usually ask this. When you first came here, those first few weeks, those first month or so.

LODYJENSKY: Yes.

LEVINE: Was there anything about this country that struck you as different from—I mean, I'm sure all of it was different, but anything about it that was particularly striking or—

LODYJENSKY: No. Well, striking, of course, you know, that downtown. But on the other hand, you know, here we were. We were comfortable after the few months of when we left Paris and went to Toulouse and then to Marseilles and then all this “tu-la-bu-lu”. So we were settled in this little hotel, which we found comfortable and you know, we were out of the turmoil.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: After all, we had left an occupied country, you know, and so in—in a way it felt good and then I was lucky enough to start working and then I was on top of the world because here I was working, you see.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LODYJENSKY: That's what really did the trick.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LODYJENSKY: And that—that was an amazing thing because, as I say, I didn't even speak English, but a good friend of mine, also from the University of Paris, and we remained friends until she died. She and her husband, and her kids. She was already—she came before me, and she was working Beekman Downtown Hospital as a resident and she said, “You know, there is somebody who is sick for --- you could come and make a replacement for two

weeks.” I said, “Lucy, how am I going to do it? I don’t speak.”
“Well, you try.” But, you know, I went and I met this—the director of the hospital, this English lady, who was a nurse and she told me, “Dr. Lucy, she doesn’t speak English.” Said, “Look, you try,” and I tried and at first it was absolutely ridiculous because I would come to take a history. I was in the surgical ward. “Hello, what—why are you in the hospital?” “Oh, I fell of a ladder.” “I don’t know, what is a ladder?” I had a French accent at that time.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: “What is a ladder,” so everybody was very happy to tell the doctor what a ladder was, you know.

LEVINE: Right. [Laughs]

LODYJENSKY: They didn’t realize that I was twenty-four, everybody was really kind to me, you know.

LEVINE: Ah.

LODYJENSKY: And pretty soon I started speaking because there was no choice. I mean, here I was on duty every second day, twenty-four hours and then I worked until seven o’clock. And then I took the subway and came home and then I went back and—well, I start—I was immersed in English and I learned. I mean, what can --- else can you do?

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Wow. Well, that’s pretty amazing.

LODYJENSKY: Look, I’ll find this picture for you.

LEVINE: Okay.

LODYJENSKY: It's one of the best pictures there is.

LEVINE: It's a beautiful picture, yeah.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah, it's much better than some of the others.

LEVINE: Okay.

LODYJENSKY: But I have an extra one.

LEVINE: That would be wonderful. Now, do you still speak French? Do you have occasion?

LODYJENSKY: Oh, yes. I don't have too many occasions, but I speak. After all, you know, I was in school from eight years to twenty-four.
[Laughs]

LEVINE: Hmm, yeah. So it's—

LODYJENSKY: So—

LEVINE: So you really are multi-lingual.

LODYJENSKY: I didn't have any accent. I think maybe now, if I went back to Paris at this point, for the first few days I would have an accent, but then it would disappear.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Probably so. Okay, well, I think we're—

LODYJENSKY: Oh, look; I hope you are not too tired.

LEVINE: No, I'm at the end of this tape and I think it's a good place to stop. I thank you so much. This is a real—a real contribution to our collection.

LODYJENSKY: It really is, huh?

LEVINE: Yes, and I'm very happy to have had the chance to talk to you.

LODYJENSKY: Well, if anybody has any more questions.

LEVINE: Okay.

LODYJENSKY: Let me know.

LEVINE: Okay.

LODYJENSKY: As you know, I talk. [Laughs]

LEVINE: [Laughs] Okay. Well, I've been speaking with Dr. Catharine Lodyjensky and she has a connection to Ellis Island as an immigrant with the Statute of Liberty and with going there for her examination before she became a citizen, and then working as a physician right up until the time it closed. So this has been a great pleasure. Thank you.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah, thank you. [Tape off/on]

LEVINE: --here, that came out in our conversation.

LODYJENSKY: Yeah.

LEVINE: You look so well and you say that you're still active in your medical—in your medical life.

LODYJENSKY: Well, the thing is this. I'm—at least once a week I go to the pediatric service, of which I was—well, I'm still called attending emeritus and I do chart reviews for quality. Chart reviews, we just—that's what it's called, to make sure that everybody puts everything that should be in there. [Unclear] I actually stopped working at the age of seventy-nine, which was in 1995, in July. So all told, I worked—well, fifty-five years was it, or sixty-five? No, fifty-five. [Laughs] In the hospitals, because I started in '41. So that's forty-nine years, plus five. That's fifty-four or fifty-five years.

LEVINE: Wow.

LODYJENSKY: Actively. [Laughs]

LEVINE: So what are you—what are you looking forward to now?

LODYJENSKY: Well, the only thing I would like is to feel well enough to be able to go and visit my family in Paris, of which there are twenty bodies.

LEVINE: Oh.

LODYJENSKY: Descended from my Uncle and Aunt Lodyjensky, which were the—the youngest brother and father—of my father. And that's

one ambition. Another was just to keep my head long enough to.
So—

LEVINE: Wow. You're in great shape now, so I hope you continue. Okay,
thank you very much.

LODYJENSKY: Thank you.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine signing off.

LODYJENSKY: Let me—

[END OF INTERVIEW]