

**EI-1410**

**ANNA ELIA GARCIA KEHL**

**BIRTHDATE:**

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**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**

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**AGE:**

**SHIP:**

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**RESIDENCES:**

[NO BACKGROUND INFO PROVIDED]

LEVINE: —here because we were talking now about when you saw the Statue of Liberty.

KEHL: Okay. I was on the ship, on the top deck and I remember coming into New York and I saw the Statue of Liberty. And [unclear]—yeah, I was on the top deck and I'll never remem—I'll never forget. I went down below. I went down the steps and I had never seen a black person. And I saw these black couple of men sitting around the table. And I'll never forget this one eating an apple, a green apple. I see this really black person, [chuckles] this beautiful green apple, you know. And I just—oh, I got so scared. And I ran back upstairs. I ran to my father, you know, the bunk that we were in. Ah! Oh, and I was telling my father about it. I don't—I don't remember what he said, or what he didn't say, or what my mother—because I do remember that my family was very seasick when we were coming to America. Even I was seasick. And we stayed in our bunks and we laid in our beds because it—it was just not a very good voyage for us [chuckles] because we got so seasick. But, yeah, I do remember going

up above, you know, and seeing the statue. And—and I imagine other people saw it, you know. We were so happy.

LEVINE: When you first got to this country, were there other things that you saw that you had never seen before? When you first got here, the first weeks or so?

KEHL: Well, when we went on the farm, the—the—the—the man that sponsored us, we went on his farm. I'd never seen cows. I never saw horse standing up and sleeping. I couldn't understand why he didn't lay down. I mean, all of this, you know, and—and—and we had chickens on the farm. And they would lay eggs and I've never—I never knew about that. I never saw that, not—we—my mother went into the barn and—and picked the eggs out of the nests. And it was just—everything was so strange to me and so—so different. You know?

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Oh, and then we—when we went on—this man, I'm remembering now, he had two farms. Then he took us to his other farm. And it was a smaller house. Uh-hmm, I remember that. And that's where I saw the horse and the cows and the chickens. On the first farm, it was nothing but a barn there, a lot of woods in back of the house with the stream, [clears throat] vines hanging from the trees. And we would—my—my brother, my sister and I, we would swing from one tree to another like Tarzan on these vines. Oh, it was just—it was just—just amazing to me because I never saw these kinds of things, never had this. You know?

LEVINE: Were you aware at all of your family feeling relief from being out of German, having been there, you know, probably through bombing and—and World War I—World War II? Was this—did you think that your whole family were just feeling better, having come here?

KEHL: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, because I used to—in the evening, we didn't have a television. And in the evening we would all sit around in the living room—I guess that's what it was—and talk. And I know that my mother and father were very happy that they were here in America and we had so much. And they were—they were happy because they had so much food and—and—and freedom. And I guess they just couldn't really—they were a little bit, like, leery about it, a little bit afraid because it was, like, maybe too good to be true. They never had so much. They never had such a beautiful, big house to live in compared to what they had, one room, and compared to them having to go out in the fields and try to dig up some potatoes or something to bring home. They had all this food. And I guess my mother just didn't know how to act.

LEVINE: Wow.

KEHL: She was so happy. Uh-hmm. And the farmer used to take my family, my mother and father, shopping on Friday for groceries. You know, I guess he paid them for taking care of his farms, you—you see? And it was just—my—my mother and father, they were so happy because they were able to buy all this food for us, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Wow.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Well, that's—it's a nice place to end. Okay. Thank you—

KEHL: Okay.

LEVINE: —very much. We're going to close off here. [tape off/on] Do you know if they had been in that area in the Ukraine, their parents, their parents before them? Do you know if that's like where they had—the family had come from for many generations?

KEHL: Yes, as far as I know, they did.

LEVINE: Okay.

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: I didn't know my grandmother or any of the, you know—my father's parents nor my mother's parents. I didn't know them. But, yes, as far as I know, they did live there.

LEVINE: Do you—

KEHL: But there was a city and also on a—like a country—villages, small villages. Like here, we would have counties. There they have villages. Well, they lived in the villages.

LEVINE: I see. Okay. And do you know what prompted your mother and father to leave the Ukraine to come, you know, to this country?

KEHL: For a better life.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. This is a wonderful book. Wow. Now, how did you come by this book?

KEHL: Okay. I have a nephew. In fact, I have three nephews that live in Livu [PH] now. They are my brother, the one that I never knew—they are his sons.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: And they live there now. One of the nephews, Roman, [unclear] also. He came to America several years ago, visited—just for a visit. And that's when my brother, Mike, was still alive. My brother, Mike, has been dead for two years now. Okay? And he brought this book to my brother. And when my brother died, I took the book.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Wow.

KEHL: As a matter of fact, my nephew from Ukraine is here in America now—

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: —with his wife.

LEVINE: Wow.

KEHL: And they're going back to Ukraine in—in—in May.

LEVINE: I see. So did you get to see him?

KEHL: Yes, they lived with me for four months.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Oh, wow. Oh, so that's [unclear].

KEHL: And they don't speak English at all.

LEVINE: Oh—

KEHL: [chuckles]

LEVINE: But you speak Ukrainian?

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: Oh, that's wonderful.

KEHL: I speak very, very fluently in Ukrainian but I do—I do not write nor read in Ukrainian.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, okay. So what—you know, we—why don't you say the name you were born with and spell your last name?

KEHL: Hrynczyszyn. It's H-R-Y-N-C-Z-Y-S-Z-Y-N.

LEVINE: Okay, and do you know your Mexico's maiden name?

KEHL: Yes, it was Fedak.

LEVINE: Could you spell that?

KEHL: F-E-D-A-K.

LEVINE: Okay, and what was your mother's first name? Oh, it was—

KEHL: Anna.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Okay. And so you never knew grandparents or aunts or uncles or any of that.

KEHL: I didn't know them.

LEVINE: [unclear], right.

KEHL: Well, I do know that my mother did tell me she did only have one sister. And her—yes, she only had one sister. My father was not a man of many words so [chuckles] I don't know.

LEVINE: I see.

KEHL: He had brothers. I don't know how many. [chuckles] But I've never met them.

LEVINE: Okay, but all your—your two brothers and sister who came to this country with you, they had all been born in the Ukraine.

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: You were the only one—

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: —that was born in Germany.

KEHL: Yeah. My—my sister, Mary, whom is like—I think she's 78 now—she was already here in America with her husband.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: So I had a sister here in America.

LEVINE: I see.

KEHL: You know?

LEVINE: Do you know—did—was she married when she came to this country?

KEHL: Yes, she was married in Germany.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: I have pictures of her wedding in Germany—

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: —that my mother had and I took all the pictures that my mother had from Germany and you know—

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: I have them now.

LEVINE: So you spoke Ukrainian in the family? In—in the home?

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So—

KEHL: Everyone in my family, we speak Ukrainian.

LEVINE: I see. So when—at the time that your mother and father and sister and two brothers left the Ukraine, it was the Soviet Union by then. Right?

KEHL: Yes, Ukraine was in under the communist country at that time. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, I can understand why it is—

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: —you'd want to leave.

KEHL: And that's—my parents, you know, with all of us children, they wanted us to have a better life.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: You know. Not be under the communists.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So the area that Livu is in—is—is it near the Vogel River? Did you tell me that on the phone?

KEHL: It's—

LEVINE: No. No, it isn't? Okay. I don't know—do you have any sense of where it is—

KEHL: Livu?

LEVINE: —in the Ukraine? Yeah.

KEHL: It should—see, if it's—the writing in that book is in English also—

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: —on the side. So it should tell—

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: —maybe. You know?

LEVINE: Uh-huh, okay.

KEHL: A description. You kn—see where it—on the side here?

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Does it tell you?

LEVINE: No, it's all in—

KEHL: In Ukrainian?

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Oh, doesn't tell me much of anything. [chuckles]

LEVINE: No. [chuckles] Okay. Well, at least you've got the right spelling so I assume we could find it. Okay. So did your mother and father keep up other Ukrainian customs?

KEHL: Oh, yes. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Like, what kinds of things did they do that—

KEHL: Well, the food.

LEVINE: —were Ukrainian?

KEHL: Food, for one thing. We had all Ukrainian food, mostly all Ukrainian food all the time when my mother was still alive. And we went—

LEVINE: Well—

KEHL: —to the Ukrainian Church here. So—

LEVINE: Is that the one with that golden—with the golden dome?

KEHL: Well, that's a new one that's built on Eastern Avenue. Yeah—yes, that's a Ukrainian church. However, when we came to America, the Ukrainian church—we had a Ukrainian church that was right here on Wolf [PH] Street. It was a small church. It's still there, as a matter of fact.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: But it's not a church any longer.

LEVINE: I see.

KEHL: You know. But, yes, it's still there. And—

LEVINE: Would that be called Ukrainian Orthodox?

KEHL: No, the Ukrainian Orthodox is more like a Russian.

LEVINE: And what kind of—

KEHL: I'm Ukrainian. I'm a [telephone rings]—

LEVINE: We're going to pause here. [tape off/on]

KEHL: I was just thinking, some of the things that I don't remember, I'm not able to tell you at this time. However, I'm sure I would be able to. Because, like I said, have my nephew here from Ukraine.

LEVINE: Yeah. [chuckles]

KEHL: And who would know anything better about Ukraine than my nephew that still lives there? He remembers all about Ukraine being under the communists—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: —communism. Because he was there at that time and the suffering and the life he had, it was just—some of the things he's told me just—it was unbelievable.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

KEHL: So I'm sure that I would be able to find out a lot—

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: —more that I could share with you.

LEVINE: Well, you know, I—we keep a folder on anybody who's in the interview collection of any additional information, whether it's something written by you or—

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —about you or photographs or—

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: You know, anything like that. So anything—if you wanted to, you know, write it or type it or anything and put it in the folder, that'll be wonderful.

KEHL: Uh-hmm, that's good.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, so let's see. So your mother kept—what were the foods? What were the Ukrainian foods that she—

KEHL: Oh, okay. Okay. This is a Polish food also. But in Ukrainian they're called perher [PH]. In Polish, they're pierogis.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

KEHL: Okay. Okay, but they're—the Polish people filled their pierogis with different things. Okay, the Ukrainian is perher and we fill ours with potato and cheese or sauerkraut. Or they can also be filled with a—a—a—a—a fruit, like maybe blueberries or cherries. Another Ukrainian food—here in America, you would call it pigs in a blanket. However, in Ukrainian, they're holupshe.

LEVINE: How do you—do you know how to spell it?

KEHL: Holupshe. H-O-L-U-P-S-H-E, I think.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: And my mother—every Sunday, that was what we had every Sunday, a whole big roasting pan, holupshe. And she filled them with rice and ground beef, onion. And then she would wrap that up in cabbage leaves and bake them. They aren't cooked; they're baked. And on top of that, she would put, like—she would bake along with them chicken legs. You know, that was every Sunday—

LEVINE: [unclear].

KEHL: —we'd have that.

LEVINE: Wow.

KEHL: At Easter time, we have—okay. Okay, the blessed food. We'd bless the basket the day before. On Easter, we would not be able to have any kind of breakfast, or nothing to eat before we had a bite—a little bit of the blessed food.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: So in the—in the basket, she would put a little container of salt, a small container of butter—not margarine, butter; the Ukrainian bread, homemade, which my mother did. Sausage, eggs, hard-boiled eggs, but not with the peels. You know, the unpeeled.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: She would put them in. Because we couldn't throw anything away that was blessed. So these—this food was ready to eat.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: Uh-hmm. And then it would be decorated with the greenery, some sort of greenery, a plant of some sort but not really a plant, a greenery.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: Whatever—I—I don't know how you would—

LEVINE: Like—just like leaves and a stem and—

KEHL: Yeah, something. You know?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: Uh-hmm, and red beet soup.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: Borscht.

LEVINE: Borscht, uh-huh.

KEHL: That's a Ukrainian dish.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-hmm.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And that would go in the basket?

KEHL: No.

LEVINE: No.

KEHL: No.

LEVINE: [unclear] you would make—

KEHL: No, I'm just talking about the Ukrainian foods. Yeah.

LEVINE: How do you spell the Ukrainian pierogi, the word you said?

KEHL: Perher.

LEVINE: Yeah, how do you—how do you spell that?

KEHL: I wouldn't know how to spell that in Ukrainian. I don't know. Perher. I know it's a p—per—P-E-R or P-U-R, I don't know. I don't know.

LEVINE: Okay.

KEHL: No.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Uh-hmm. And I'm just trying think what other traditions. Okay. Holy supper. Christmas, we would have holy supper. My mother would—again, the homemade baked bread, perher, no meat that night. We would have the perher, but my mother used to make a mushroom gravy with the perher, fish. Uh-hmm. Very bland. Everything very bland. It was a meatless—you know, that was the holy supper.

LEVINE: And you'd have that Christmas Eve?

KEHL: Uh-hmm. And then our tradition was everybody would go to midnight mass. Because I was born—you know, I'm—I was born Catholic, even though I have—I have changed over to another religion now. But I'm talking about, you know, when I was small.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah. Oh. So how do you think of yourself, as far as Ukrainian and American?

KEHL: I think of myself more of an American. All of American, [unclear] [laughter] because the only thing I—while, I do speak Ukrainian, I don't follow those traditions any longer.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: I don't make Ukrainian foods. I think that all went away when my mother died. You know, she was the—how should I say? She kept it together. She was like the glue, you know. [laughs]

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: So—so the family lived in Germany for a few years?

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And do you know where in Germany they were?

KEHL: Well, that—where I was born, Shamhaptan. [PH]

LEVINE: Oh, right. Western—

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: You said, didn't you?

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah, okay. So—and did your father, like, work there too? Do you know?

KEHL: Yes. Yes, there was—and my brother, John. He worked there. My brother, Mike. He worked there. It was, like, in a wood shop.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm. And they used to make different Ukrainian design wood. In fact, I have something I can show you.

LEVINE: Oh, good. And I'll take a picture of it [unclear].

KEHL: Uh-hmm. And see that pillow there?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: On the top?

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: That's a Ukrainian work.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: That little pillow, the white—

LEVINE: Yes.

KEHL: —with the—that's Ukrainian work. This.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

KEHL: See?

LEVINE: Decorative spoon, uh-huh.

KEHL: Spoon, yeah.

LEVINE: So they made Ukrainian things in Germany?

KEHL: Uh-hmm, where my brother—my brothers worked, yes.

LEVINE: Do you know if there were other Ukrainians around in Germany—

KEHL: Yes, there were.

LEVINE: —where you were?

KEHL: Yes, there were.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So maybe a number of Ukrainians came to that part of Germany until they could get to the United States?

KEHL: Well, I'm sure there were. But like I said—but I have no way—or I didn't—I—I don't know—

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: —because I was so young. However, I could ask my sister and see if she would know. I'm not sure she would. I know my nephew, the one from Ukraine wouldn't know because he's—

LEVINE: Right.

KEHL: —he's younger than I am. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Right.

KEHL: And he never came at the Germany. He—he didn't live there. He can only tell you about—tell me all about Ukraine, you know.

LEVINE: Right. So I'm wondering how you got out in—oh, 1949. The war was over. So—

KEHL: And we were sponsor—my family was sponsored to come here to America.

LEVINE: And who sponsored?

KEHL: It was a man. He was a lawyer. And I—I believe his last name was Smith. And he had a farm in Rockville, Maryland. And he was looking for a family, a large family that would be able—that would be able to work on his farm in—in the barn. And he had horses and he had cows. So I imagine my family answered to that, or maybe he—see, I don't know how that happened. I guess he—you know, he got in touch with the embassy or whomever, and to—to say that he's looking for a certain type of a family. And because my family, with my—my two brothers, because—and my father, you know, were avai—would be able to do that. So he sponsored us and he brought us over. And we lived on his farm in Rockville, Maryland.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: And my—my father and my brother, Mike, they worked in the barn. My father, I remember him milking the cows, horses—

LEVINE: Well, just to back up, do—has anything been told to you about either the trip over or Ellis Island or anything prior to when you got to the farm?

KEHL: I'm not quite understanding [unclear].

LEVINE: When the family came from Germany.

KEHL: Right.

LEVINE: Was—did they ever tell you anything about the ship—

KEHL: No.

LEVINE: The—you know, Ellis Island?

KEHL: No.

LEVINE: Nothing, okay. So—so was that a good arrangement for your family—

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: —to be in Rockville?

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And how long did your family stay on that farm?

KEHL: Well, I guess for—well, I'm thinking—I guess for about a year because I was—maybe two years or a year. Because when we came here, I lived in the Canton [PH] area and I started St. Casmere [PH] School, so I was five years old.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So maybe a year or so.

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. And so then when they left—I guess your family—your brothers and your father probably paid back whatever the sponsorship involved.

KEHL: I think that sponsorship must have been involved in that—like that—that this man was looking for someone to work an x number of—one year or two years. You know, on his farm, take care of it, a caretaker.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: You know?

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: In exchange for—

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: I do believe that. There again, like I said, if my sister would remember it, I will ask her.

LEVINE: Okay. Okay, so—so then where did the family move to?

KEHL: Here to Baltimore. Oh, I wish my brother, Mike, was alive. He would know everything. He used to live right downstairs from me on the second floor.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: You would be able to interview him.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: He knew so much. But anyhow, we moved here to Baltimore and we lived in the Canton area on O'Donnell [PH] Street.

LEVINE: Hmm. And then did—what did your father do then?

KEHL: My father worked—okay, when we lived on O'Donnell Street, my father worked for the man that we rented the house from him that we were living in. He had a construction company and my father was working for him.

LEVINE: Hmm. And—

KEHL: What was his name? You know, I did know it but I can't remember it. [unclear].

LEVINE: Okay. Well—

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: —started school, could you speak English?

KEHL: Not a word. I used to—I came—we lived on O'Donnell Street and one block away was the school, St. Casmere School. And I would go, sit in class and cry and cry and cry. And the nun would just send me home because all I wanted to do was be with my mother where I knew what she was saying. [laughs]

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. So did your—your brothers and sisters, I suppose they went—did they go to school while you were at the farm?

KEHL: Yes, they did. They went to school there. Yeah.

LEVINE: So they were starting to speak English.

KEHL: Yes, they knew. They knew some—a lot more than I did in English. [chuckles] You know.

LEVINE: So did they—did they try to teach your mother and father or—

KEHL: No, my mother—my mother—not my father. My mother went to night school here in Baltimore—

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: —to learn the English language.

LEVINE: Now—

KEHL: So she spoke broken English.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, this Canton area of Bal—is it Canton, the area—

KEHL: Canton, yeah.

LEVINE: —of Baltimore?

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was it an immigrant area? Were there other people who had come [unclear]?

KEHL: Yeah, most of it was.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what kind of—what countries?

KEHL: Ukraine.

LEVINE: Oh, Ukrainian.

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, it was Ukrainian?

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah. Oh, okay.

KEHL: Most of the people there were Ukrainian and Polish. And most of the people today still are immigrant Polish people, Ukrainian people. Their families, I'm saying. Not the original ones. You know, their families.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. So is—did your mother and father know anybody here?

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: Oh, they did?

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: I see.

KEHL: Uh-hmm. They knew other Ukrainian families.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, I see. So I guess your mother could get along and your father could along—

KEHL: Yes.

LEVINE: —with the people that they knew.

KEHL: Yeah. Yes, other Ukrainian families that were here already.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: And you know, and I guess that's why they came to that area, because there were other Ukrainian families here, you know.

LEVINE: And were the services—like the mass and everything, was that in Ukrainian?

KEHL: Yes, when we went to Ukrainian church, yes, everything was in Ukrainian.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So how—what was it like for you after you stopped crying [chuckles] in school?

KEHL: Well, I don't even remember how I started to pick up on the English. And then I felt comfortable because I knew what was being said. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: You know, and I can't remember how that happened or how—but it was okay.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And were there other children, like, in your class, that were also not able to speak English?

KEHL: No, I was the only one.

LEVINE: Oh, well, that must have been tough.

KEHL: Very.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Yeah.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So—so, essentially, you have stayed where your family settled when they came here. I mean, you're not very far from where—

KEHL: Well, now I am. I—I kind of look at it now that I—I guess I needed to come back home. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Oh, I see. You left this area and came back?

KEHL: Uh-huh, I lived in Pennsylvania for two years. And then when I was still in Baltimore, I left the city and I went into the county of Baltimore County.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, let's see. So what did you do? You went to school and then what did you do? How far did you go? What did you do after you finished school?

KEHL: Okay. Well, I went to school and then my mother took me out of St. Casmere School. I was going into the fifth grade, and then I went to a public school, which was located on Linwood [PH] Avenue and Eastern Avenue. And then I finished at 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I went to high school. I went all through high school.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And did you work then?

KEHL: Yes, well, when I—actually, I was going—I—I left school at the age of 16 and I went to work in sales. And then I just kept moving myself up the ladder, sort of, you know. And then I went into the medical field, worked at Church Hospital. And then I went back into sales again. And then I went back into the medical field again and worked at the East Point Nursing Home. And I worked at the—it's—it's John Hopkins Bayview

Medical Center now, but it used to be Francis Scott King Medical Center. I worked there on Eastern Avenue.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: And then I was actually in my 40s when I got my GED and I graduated. I got my diploma. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Wow. Okay. So what—what do you feel proud of? What do you feel satisfied at having done?

KEHL: Oh, the way I really improved my life and kept right on going and never gave up.

LEVINE: What—

KEHL: I wasn't satisfied with one job. I just wanted to do more and more and more. I—I left—I left a few things out. I—I also worked with—in—with sexual assault, domestic violence center. I counseled a lot of people. I'm very proud of that, that I just kept right on going.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: You know, I did not stand still. I have to now, and only I stopped because I had to because my eyes are failing. But if it wasn't for that, I'd still keep on going. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah. What—to what do you attribute that—that—that drive to not give up and keep moving forward?

KEHL: I don't know. I think it's something that I got from my mother. It wasn't that I saw what she did with her life, because she couldn't do with her life as she would have wanted to do. However, I knew that my mother was able and had the knowledge and had—I got her strength and determination. That's what it was.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: I was just so determined because I think what I was looking at, how determined she was to bring her family here to America. And she did it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: And I just knew that, you know, that's where [chuckles] I got my strength and determination—

LEVINE: Wow.

KEHL: —to keep on going.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So let's see. So you have two children?

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what are their names?

KEHL: Robert and my daughter's name is Melanie [PH].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And do you have grandchildren?

KEHL: Yeah, Melanie—Melanie has two sons, Anthony and Joseph.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Okay. Is there anything else you can—I mean, you were so young. But I wonder if—I guess the immigrant experience affected you through your mother, your—what you just said about your mother and her strength and her—yeah. So I suppose that's the impact on you of the immigration.

KEHL: Uh-hmm, right, right. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

KEHL: Well, that—you know, that's the way I see—I get—I never thought about it at that time when I was younger, but I know that's what it was now. You know?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

KEHL: Because—yeah, determination, never giving up.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Okay, is there anything else you can think of that we haven't covered that you want to mention?

KEHL: Oh, how I used to dance the Ukrainian dances when I was in Germany. I was three years old and I had a Ukrainian outfit on. We—the Ukrainian dances and, you know, the tradition there was the outfits they would wear, costumes, like, with the A-print and the skirt and the boots. And then they would have, like, a ba—no. What is it? What would you call it around the head? And—like a—a band around the—on top of the head that would sit on top of the head with different colored flowers. And then from it would be hanging different colored ribbons.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: That was the—you know, the costume. And as—as a matter of fact, I have a picture of myself.

LEVINE: Oh—

KEHL: Little—little me standing there with that costume on because I used to do all of the Ukrainian dances when I was three years old in Germany.

LEVINE: Oh.

KEHL: I would never be able to do them now but I did them then.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

KEHL: Uh-hmm. Things like that stand out in my mind.

LEVINE: So it sounds as though your family went from the Ukraine to a Ukrainian community in Germany and to a Ukrainian community—

KEHL: Community in America, yes.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

KEHL: Right.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, well—

KEHL: See, I don't have—I don't have anything—I—I don't know too much because of hardships or what my family really did go through that I could tell you, because I never went through it. Because my mother and father, they brought us out of that, took us away from the—you know, when Ukraine was under the commu—communism, took us away from that. However, my brothers that died, I mean, they know all of that. They remember all that. They lived through all of that hardship. I remember when my brother would tell me that—well, my mother even told me that. They were actually—they were going to take my family—before I was born, they were going to take my family to the concentration camp. You know? They had them on the wagon. How they—they just threw people on there and—and were going to take them to concentration camp. My mother—and why I keep saying my mother, because my mother spoke German. And my mother was the one that had the strength and determination to get us out of there.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: You know? So these are the kinds of things that my—my mother, when she was alive, told me, and my brothers, when they were alive, could tell me. I didn't live through any of that.

LEVINE: Oh, right.

KEHL: But I know that my family did. Uh-hmm. Yeah. So it was—it was a hard life for them. And I remember my brother, Mike, telling me that—I had a brother that died. He was four years older than I, my brother, Walter. And I remember Mike telling me that Walter was just a little baby. And my mother had to go out in the fields and work and so did my father. And they left Mike, who was just a young boy himself, at home. And they lived—my family lived in, like, one-room house. And everybody—you know, my brothers slept together, one bed. And you know, it was just hard. And—and—and my brother, Mike told me—he says that my brother, Walter, was a little baby. And he was sitting on a floor and he was crying and crying. And there was no food in the house.

LEVINE: Hmm.

KEHL: You know, because that's what—my mother and father went out in the fields, you know, to work so they could bring some food home. But—so my—my brother, Mike, gave Walter a piece of cloth. It was a wrapped piece of cloth. Like, you know, how you give babies pacifiers now? He gave him a piece of cloth with a little bit of sugar in it in his mouth. Just

like the babies today have pacifiers, that's what my brother, Mike, did with Walt, just to keep him quiet and keep him a little bit satisfied.

LEVINE: Wow.

KEHL: You know?

LEVINE: Huh.

KEHL: So things like that, you know. I don't remember that because I wasn't there. [laughs]

LEVINE: Right.

KEHL: You know.

LEVINE: Right.

KEHL: But my family went through a lot of that stuff.

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: You know?

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Do you think there were any effects on them coming out of that?

KEHL: Yeah. On my brothers and sisters—

LEVINE: Yeah.

KEHL: Yes, uh-hmm. I think it did. Memories, you know. They were all well. I'm not saying mentally any of them suffered from it. But I'm sure, because of all of these unhappy memories and—and lack of food and lack of clothing and lack of—you know, the living conditions were terrible. You know, physically, they suffered greatly. You know?

LEVINE: Well, they must have been very happy to get here.

KEHL: Yes, yes. They were, uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, well, I'll be very interested to see the pictures [chuckles]—picture of you with the Ukrainian outfit dancing.

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: And you had something else. Did you say you had something your father made?

KEHL: [unclear].

LEVINE: Okay. Well, why don't we close off the interview and then I—I would like to take a picture of you—

KEHL: Yeah.

LEVINE: —if that's okay. And I'd like to take a picture of the things.

KEHL: Okay. I'll show you that little picture of myself.

LEVINE: Okay, that's wonderful.

KEHL: I have it.

LEVINE: Okay. I'm speaking with Anna Garcia Kehl. And this is Janet Levine signing off for the National Park Service.

[END OF INTERVIEW]