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ESTHER SHAPIRO GOLOGOR

BIRTH DATE: MAY 13, 1909

INTERVIEW DATE: 4/29/1992

RUNNING TIME: 1:00:28

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: PETER HOM

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND RECORDING STUDIO

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 4/1993

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 6/1993

PALESTINE, 1921

AGE 12

PORT: ALEXANDRIA

RESIDENCES:

- **MONTEFIORE HEISER**
- **US RESIDENCE: NYC, E. 98 ST.**

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here today with Esther Gologor, who came to the United States from Palestine in 1921 when she was twelve years old. Today is April 29, 1992 and we're here in the Ellis Island Recording Studio. Well, welcome Mrs. Gologor. It's a pleasure to have you here.

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GOLOGOR: Thank you very much. I'm glad to be here.

LEVINE: Why don't we begin by my asking you your birth date.

GOLOGOR: I was born on May 13, 1909.

LEVINE: And where were you born?

GOLOGOR: In a little town outside of the old city of Jerusalem called Montefiore Heiser.

LEVINE: Could you spell that?

GOLOGOR: H-E-S-I-S-E-R. It means houses in Yiddish. It was the first settlement outside of the old city that was built by Montefiore, Moses Montefiore, who was a great philanthropist. And he came into Jerusalem at that time and saw the need to expand from the old, old walled city of Jerusalem. And I was born there.

LEVINE: Now, were you living there the entire time before?

GOLOGOR: No. No. I do remember one little incident in that little settlement where the men would just lift me up in the air, you know, when you pick up a cute little kid, and that's how I remember it. But we moved shortly after that to, more to the outskirts of the city. It was beginning to branch out and they built a religious community called Shaare Hessed. Shaare stands for gate. It's the Gate of Mercy, it was called. And there were aisles of houses. Two, three, four aisles. That was the whole community

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where we lived and where now one of my cousins still lives in that house that we had been in.

LEVINE: Well, can you describe the house that you lived in?

GOLOGOR: Sure. It was a two-room house. Two beautiful rooms, made out of stone. In Jerusalem, all the homes are built of the native stones, of Jerusalem stone. It's beautiful. There were only two rooms and we were four children before my father was called to come here to the United States. He left, can I tell you? He left because he was going to be, he was looked for. He was an eligible man, to get into the Turkish army. And none of the Jewish people wanted to join the Turkish army. It was under the Ottoman Empire at that time. And I knew of at least one person who never came back from the Turkish army. The father of my friend, they never heard from her again. So that none of the Jewish people wanted to join. They hid. My father hid in an attic. We call it a badin. He hid in an attic for something like two months. And my grandfather, my mother's father, who was a very modern kind of person because he had already been in Africa, in South Africa at the turn of the century. He was a humanitarian person, and he was interested in the Sephardim of Jerusalem. The Sephardic group were neglected at that time. No one looked after them. No one saw to their health and their interests or whatever they needed. My grandfather went to South Africa, raised money and came back and established them in a home, what he called an old age home, for the Sephardic Jews at that time. Well, he managed to work towards a passport for my father and within a few months he was able, my father was able to leave. This was in 1914.

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LEVINE: So you were about . . .

GOLOGOR: I was five years old at the time.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, who was living in your home before your father left?

GOLOGOR: My mother, an older brother and a younger brother and a younger sister. We were four children. I was the oldest girl. And I shared a lot of responsibility because of it.

LEVINE: What kinds of responsibilities did you have?

GOLOGOR: Well, I would have to help with carrying the baggage. My mother would, let's see. We knew no other language but Yiddish, but we knew how to sign our names in English. We were taught that before we left. They said it was necessary to know how to sign your name, so that you don't put a cross.

LEVINE: Well, before you actually left, were you also sort of more responsible, having lots of duties in the household?

GOLOGOR: Yes. I had to do the chores. I was the oldest daughter. I had to do chores in the house, always, to help with various holiday preparations.

LEVINE: Were you a very religious family?

GOLOGOR: We were religious, yes, of course. Most everybody in Jerusalem was at the time.

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LEVINE: And can you recall any celebrations . . .

GOLOGOR: Certainly.

LEVINE: . . . from when you were a little girl, that you can describe?

GOLOGOR: I can recall a seder that I spent with my grandparents. They took me into their seder. I was the only one, the only grandchild. And I happened to have had a voice. I always sang in my youth, in my young days, I sang. My father always said I should have been a boy so that I could be a help to him. He always sang like a hasen did. He didn't have too big a voice, but he sang always on the beama, you know, as a hasen. And I used to, you know, accompany him a lot. He said I should have been a boy. But my older brother had a gorgeous voice, anyway.

LEVINE: So when you went to have this seder at your grandparents.

GOLOGOR: I remember that he showered me with compliments because I stayed up the whole night, I read the Haggadah all through the night and sang all the songs. You know, at the end of the seder you sing all the Passover songs, and I sang them because I had a voice and that's what I remember as a little kid, child. I don't know how old I was. I might have been six or something like that.

LEVINE: So had you started school then while you were still living . . .

GOLOGOR: Not then, no. Much later. I started school, Hebrew school. It was called

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Betsethel Levanot, School for Girls, and it was, I remember this school outside of Machnea Huddah, which was the marketplace, and still is the most beautiful marketplace in Jerusalem. When I was there the last time in 1989 I brought home a radish that they grow in Israel as big as this. (she gestures) You know the red radishes. I managed to sneak it in to the United States. But it was a beautiful thing. And they do grow vegetables in Israel that are out of this world. The tomatoes, I buy them here. I pay three dollars a pound to get an Israeli tomato. But they're gorgeous.

LEVINE: Well, when you think back at that time, before you decided, you and the rest of your family, to come, what are the kinds of things that you think about that happened to you or that you remember fondly or not fondly?

GOLOGOR: Some very sad things. We went through the First World War. When my father left in 1914 finally, when he managed to get his papers, we got one letter from him, and then everything stopped. No checks, no letters from my father. For three years we didn't hear, we didn't get anything. It was during the First World War. And my mother had to eke out a living for the four of us children. My kid sister, who was an infant at the time my father left, had a very unhealthy upbringing because there wasn't enough milk. My mother had no milk to nurse her with. And things were quite bad. I think you read in my report at one time I picked up orange peel from the ground because the oranges there were so thick with peel, it was delicious. I was hungry. So we picked it up from the floor to eat it. But it was sad. My mother did a lot of things that an ordinary woman would be unable to do. She was very strong and she, for instance, she would make the deserters, the soldiers from the army who deserted, and there

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were many desertees at the time, they would stop at our house because we faced the field. Our house was just in an area where there are no other buildings. There was a whole row of buildings, but that's, there were no places to go to or, it was field, or going down a little further it was forest. I remember the forest, we used to go there to celebrate a day, a field day from school. But my mother did a lot of things like baking bread, taking the bread to the Arab village. I even remember the name, Emselabee was the name of the village, the Arab village where she would sell her bread and we'd have some money to buy what we needed. The soldiers who deserted would bring in blankets, Army blankets. My mother would make coats out of them, sell them, and have some money for food. But she was very resourceful in these things.

LEVINE: It sounds like being in the Turkish army was not an experience anybody wanted to have. What had you heard as a child about the Turkish army?

GOLOGOR: They put the Jews in the front, that was the first thing that they would talk about. The Jewish people were placed in the front, and that's why they were killed off. That was one of the worst things. (she sighs) I don't recall many things in those years because, you know, we were busy trying to live at the time. One of the things my daughter wanted me to remember was, you know, in Israel they have, the olive tree was the country's tree. I used to pick off olives from the tree and eat it. But there were also apricots were very prevalent, apricot trees. My mother would pick apricots and make jam. My kid brother would climb up. She would put it up on the top shelf, but he would climb up, and I helped him to get to that jam jar, because it was so delicious. So the pits of the apricots I saved in a bag for a long, long time because someone said that if you

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rubbed an apricot pit you would get chewing gum. (they laugh) You know, kids would absorb that. Well, I saved the pits for a long time. I got a whole bag full. Until I tried one, I got no success with chewing gum and I became disgusted, so I poured the whole bag into the garden, the entrance. We had a little garden, you know, a spot, land, at that time, the two rooms and a garden. So I threw the apricots down there. And my mother used to wash the patio. It was all stone, beautiful Jerusalem stone. She would wash the stone. I remember helping her, you know, with the rag. And the water would flow right into the pits, right into that garden. There was a gate, like, this way, and this is where they were. Well, by the time we left for America there was a tree, an apricot little tree this high. (she gestures) I remember I hated to leave it. But when I came back twelve years later to Jerusalem it was no longer there, whatever they did with it. But my cousin lived in that house and still lives there. He still lives there.

LEVINE: Well now, after your father left that's when your mother was baking the bread.

GOLOGOR: To earn a living. We had no money coming in from anywhere.

LEVINE: And then you did hear from your father after three years?

GOLOGOR: Three years later we started to get letters and some money. Not that there was much. It was after the war, everything was disrupted. And we needed clothes, and so forth. But when the English, you see, the English came in, and that's a story in itself. I remember, through the Jaffa Gate, Lord Allenby came on his white horse. It's not a fiction story. I remember

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it. He was riding on his white horse through that gate, and coming up what we call Jaffa Road. It was one of the most famous roads in Jerusalem. He rode up and my mother had gotten us dressed in our Sabbath clothes, in the best things, because she knew that the English were coming into our city, that they won the war. The Turks were no longer there and that was a happy, happy occasion. She met my teacher. My mother, for the first time, had met my teacher at that time, also waiting to see the marchers come in, and glowing reports she got. I remember that.

LEVINE: You were a good student.

GOLOGOR: Yes. I guess so.

LEVINE: What was your father writing to you and your mother and your family when he was in America during those years when you began to hear from him again? Can you remember?

GOLOGOR: Why he was writing?

LEVINE: What kinds of things he was saying about America or . . .

GOLOGOR: Well, that I really don't know. It was in Yiddish. He sent us pictures of what he looked like. But it took four years from that time on for him to bring us over here. This was in 1917 when the war was over, or almost over. There were skirmishes all along with the Arabs. We had a time of it. But it took four years before he was able to bring us over here. And it was a long time.

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LEVINE: Yes. Well, let's just concentrate on your mother for a minute. What was her maiden name?

GOLOGOR: Feige-Rochel.

LEVINE: Could you spell it?

GOLOGOR: Feige, which means bird. Rochel is Rachel. It's Rachel. You want me to spell it in the Yiddish? Feige, F-E-I-G-E, it's like a hyphenated, two names, Rochel, R-O-C-H-E-L.

LEVINE: Okay. And how would you describe your mother, when you think of your mother back in those times.

GOLOGOR: I want to show you a picture.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Maybe we'll look at the picture after.

GOLOGOR: Afterwards. It's in my envelope there. But I have a picture. The, well, you have a copy of it. The passport picture of the four of us and my mother. My mother was, had a strong face. She was a strong woman all along. I remember her. Maybe a bit stern at times, but she needed to be that way because let me tell you an incident. Once, when she went down to sell the bread to the Arabs, she went with a friend because it was beginning, there were skirmishes with the Arabs during those years and it was a little hard. And she was a little afraid. Strong, that she went down to the Arab village to sell her bread, but still a little panicky. And when she gave them the bread, and when it came to paying, one of the Arabs says to the

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other in Arabic, he says, "Don't pay her. Here, stab her in the back." And my mother understood because she knew Arabic. She dealt with them long enough to understand. She knew both Sephardic and Arabic. We lived with neighbors of the Sephardim and Arabs. We had Arab neighbors.

LEVINE: So what did she do in that situation?

GOLOGOR: What she did in that situation was get on the heel with her friend and they ran. Never mind the bread and the money, but they ran, and they never went down to that village again. Emselabee. I still remember the name.

LEVINE: Wow. Well, now, before we leave or start talking about when you were leaving, is there anything else that you remember about your early life there in Jerusalem?

GOLOGOR: Yes. I remember, now this may be surprising to everybody, but I was two-and-a-half years old when I remember this incident because my kid brother was two-and-a-half years younger than I. When he was born, I was so jealous that I hid under the bed. I wouldn't come out from under the bed. He took my place next to my mother. And at two-and-a-half I still needed my mother, at least I thought I did. And I wouldn't get out from under the bed until it got to the point where nobody bothered me any more, they didn't ask me to come out, and I felt sorry that I didn't come out the last time they asked me, and so I finally came out. I gave in.

LEVINE: I'm glad you did.

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GOLOGOR: But at two-and-a-half, you know, it amazes me but I remember it just as if it had happened just now. All my memories go back like that, very fresh in my mind, very vivid. I had a good memory all along, even here, when I started to work. I knew everybody's telephone number by heart without having to refer to it. I was at the switchboard a lot, and when the workers, I worked in the social service agency. The caseworkers would all come into the board and ask me to get this one and that one. It was a busy place.

LEVINE: Well, let me ask you, what was your father's name?

GOLOGOR: In Hebrew, Maishe Mordha, Morshe Mordahi is the translation.

LEVINE: And what were your sisters and brothers names?

GOLOGOR: My older brother was Nissim Nathan. My younger brother was Volf, but it's Willie. When he came here it was Willie. And then my youngest sister was Chipa, they call her. C-H-I-P-A. So it's, what do you call it?

LEVINE: Celia.

GOLOGOR: Celia, yes. We translated it into Celia. But it was Chipa at the time. It's a sort of elongated translation of a name.

LEVINE: I see. And your mother's maiden name?

GOLOGOR: Lipshitz. L-I-P-S-H-I-T-Z.

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LEVINE: Okay. And her first name?

GOLOGOR: Feige-Rochel.

LEVINE: Right. Okay. Well, now how was it decided that you would, you and your mother and your brothers and sister would come to America?

GOLOGOR: It was inevitable. My father was here for seven years without us.

LEVINE: And how about, I mean, at the time what made that decision that you would leave when you actually did leave?

GOLOGOR: Well, it meant that he had to send us the proper papers. We travelled here on my father's citizenship papers. My father became a citizen at the time he was eligible because you have to wait five years before, and so forth. But the trip took ten weeks. By the time we finally decided to leave, oh, I'll tell you what held us up for a while. My grandmother, my mother's mother died during the period that we had been planning to come here, and that was a very sad occasion. She died at the age, before she was fifty. Forty-eight, forty-nine. And it was a very sad period. So we remained until after the memorial period was over and so forth.

LEVINE: So you remained actually a year beyond . . .

GOLOGOR: No.

LEVINE: Oh, no.

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GOLOGOR: Not a year. It was the winter, the whole winter. We didn't leave until the spring. We were supposed to leave some time in the fall, I think. We were getting ready to leave, and we didn't leave until the spring.

LEVINE: And then where, do you remember what you packed to take with you when you did go?

GOLOGOR: Well, certainly. The first thing we packed was a periner, a featherbed. And that was very lucky because when we took a train, there was a train in Jerusalem to take us to Alexandria where the boat would be. When we got to Alexandria and the boat come there was no room for us. No berths, no rooms of any kind. Even the deck was full. So they told us to wait three weeks before the next boat would come, and there would be room for us. We waited in Alexandria for three weeks.

LEVINE: And you were happy to have the featherbed?

GOLOGOR: Well, not yet. We stayed, I don't remember where we stayed in Alexandria. I remember later on the other three weeks in Paris, when we had to wait three more weeks. But I don't remember where we stayed. And I'm sorry that during my youth we didn't ask questions at that time. We were so glad to be in America and live our lives and live so differently and get an education. We, my mother, when we finally got here one of the neighbors said that school is compulsory here. You must send your children to school. Well, the very next day. Labor day was Monday. The very next day my mother took all three of us who were old enough to 96th Street Public School on 96th Street and Lexington Avenue.

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LEVINE: Okay. We're going to pause right here in order to turn the tape over.

GOLOGOR: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: Okay. We'll resume now on side two of this tape. Well, let's go back to what else you packed, besides the featherbed, when you were leaving.

GOLOGOR: (she laughs) Our clothes, whatever meager. And the clothes were all things my mother made. The dresses, the blouses, little skirts with pleats. I remember those, yes. And everything we brought was handmade by my mother. The sewing machine was one of the most marvelous things to have, because she sewed to sell as well, like the winter coats from the blankets.

LEVINE: Do you remember when you left was there a send-off for you . . .

GOLOGOR: (she laughs) No.

LEVINE: From people in the town?

GOLOGOR: No, I mean, we were glad. Yes, of course my grandparents. (she pauses) Oh, yes, we had a sendoff. My grandfather and a little cousin who was an orphan, his mother had died, my mother's sister, one of my mother's

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sisters had died, and she left this little boy who lived with my grandparents. Well, my grandfather and Chiam, this young kid, came on the train with us and they didn't get off in time. They remained on the train. And I remember when the train stopped at the first junction of some sort and let them off, and we could see them standing in the field, a field, a bare field of nothing but those two people, my grandfather and the child. It's like, you know, 1921, and now it's '92. It's mind-boggling to remember it so vividly. They were standing there, stranded in the middle of nowhere. But we found out later that they were taken back to Jerusalem. Everything was all right.

LEVINE: Well, now, when you were told that the boat was too crowded in Alexandria, then you had to stay there and wait for the next boat. And where did you stay then?

GOLOGOR: It must have been a nunnery as well, because that's where they used to put us up. A church. There were no Jewish organizations at the time in these, in Alexandria, by golly.

LEVINE: Do you remember what struck you about Alexandria as a different place at that time?

GOLOGOR: I remember it when I made a trip twelve years later. We stopped in Alexandria. We went to one of the cafes and enjoyed it. It, I don't remember Alexandria at that time. All I have is a very faint recollection of trying to get up on top of the boat and we couldn't. We couldn't, they wouldn't let us, there was no room, and we just had to do what we could.

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LEVINE: Well, then did you get on the next boat three weeks later?

GOLOGOR: Well, listen to this. We waited three weeks. Three weeks came, the boat came and again there were no berths, no rooms but we got on deck with the featherbed and my mother was also carrying a little, it's not a suitcase, but in Yiddish we call it a casden, a casden.

LEVINE: A trunk?

GOLOGOR: A trunk. A little trunk. It was red, I remember. And on that trunk my mother still had some of those blankets, the army blankets, and that's where I think I slept, on the trunk. She got a deck chair for my kid sister, who was sick. She was sick throughout the trip. So she was on the deck chair. And on the periner, the featherbed, my brothers were there and my mother laid her head on the trunk where I was lying. (she laughs) It was a struggle. I think it took about eleven days for that trip to cross the Mediterranean at that time.

LEVINE: And so were you in the hold of the ship, or were you on the deck?

GOLOGOR: On deck. You know where the deck is? We walked to the very extreme front where there was a little seat. I remember sitting down with a young man there. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else about that trip?

GOLOGOR: It's vague, very vague, but I think we were also seasick. I was a little seasick.

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LEVINE: How about food on the trip?

GOLOGOR: The food, we ate herring, hard boiled eggs, bread and I think milk. That's what we ate, because we were kosher we couldn't eat any of the meats that they would have served in the dining room. We never went into the dining room. We just sat at some bench or something where they gave us these foods. But we watched the boat sailing, going, and moving ahead.

LEVINE: And did you make friends with anybody aboard the boat, or you were more or less with your own family?

GOLOGOR: No, no. I had two friends. A boy friend and I made my first girl friend who came from Jerusalem, too. And she was travelling with her mother and brother, who were being brought to America by an American man who married her mother. It was a sort of mock marriage just to bring them over to America because they were coming here to cousins, and they had nobody there.

LEVINE: Do you remember how she felt about it, or what kind of feelings . . .

GOLOGOR: Oh, yes. It was . . . (she laughs) And this man was also taking a young man for someone to bring over to America, but he misbehaved on the way and he left him in France without bringing him over to America. We could never understand that, but that's what happened to this young man. I don't know what happened to him. I'm sure he made his way. He was very, he was a fifteen year old kid. But this girl who took this man's

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name, his name was Markowitz, all the years she called herself Markowitz. And she was an Israeli like I was. And we were friends. We're still friends.

LEVINE: Oh, my goodness.

GOLOGOR: We correspond with one another. And that's how it was. It was a real friendship. You don't make friends like that early, uh, later on. We were four friends that way.

LEVINE: Four friends that . . .

GOLOGOR: Four of us that . . .

LEVINE: . . . came from Jerusalem.

GOLOGOR: No. Only the two, only Rebecca and myself were the Jerusalem ones. But when we started school here in America, we made friends with two other girls and we were, we're still friends. One is in Minnesota, one is in Florida, and this one is in Israel, and I'm here in New York.

LEVINE: That's wonderful, wonderful. So, and what about the boyfriend that you met on the boat?

GOLOGOR: That's what I mean, the young man.

LEVINE: Oh, he's the one that was sent back.

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GOLOGOR: He used to want me to go to the edge of the boat and sit down on that seat with him. (she laughs) I remember that. And, you know, a young girl, you're young for a long time.

LEVINE: Okay. So that boat then stopped in France first.

GOLOGOR: Yes, in, uh, in Marseilles.

LEVINE: But did you stay on the boat? Did it just . . .

GOLOGOR: No, no. We got off the boat and we were, and we took some kind of transportation to Cherbourg, because there we were supposed to take the boat to the United States. The U.S. Cunard Line, I remember. And it, we finally, we didn't get on the first boat that we walked up the gangplank. Four of us walked up the gangplank, five of us, my mother included. And next thing we knew we were walking down the gangplank, all five of us, with bag and baggage, back to the port. They wouldn't let us get on the boat. There was something wrong with my father's citizenship papers, they said. Until we found it out, we found ourselves stranded in a country, we didn't understand the language. Nobody understood our Yiddish. But my mother started to yell at my brother, my older brother. She says, "Do something, do something," in Yiddish. And a woman passed and understood Yiddish, so she stopped and started to help us. She took us inside the terminal and introduced us to somebody. I imagine it was the Red Cross, because they started to work on why we were brought back down from the boat. And she told us it was because there was something that wasn't quite kosher in the papers. At least that's what they thought. So they had to send back to my father, send

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back the information and wait for a reply. So they put us, there I remember where we were. We were in a nunnery. They put us in a nunnery, and they gave us a little more food than in Alexandria. They gave us, I don't remember, maybe butter on the bread, or oil, whatever.

LEVINE: They treated you well.

GOLOGOR: They treated us a little bit better, yes.

LEVINE: And wasn't it lucky that you met this woman.

GOLOGOR: This woman! My mother always referred to her as the Angel of Heaven. She always did, because whenever she talked about her, she was, she was really very helpful. And she must have been a social worker. At least I think so.

LEVINE: Maybe that's where you got your later . . .

GOLOGOR: Later on I worked for social workers all the time.

LEVINE: Okay. So then you finally did get, your father's citizenship papers were straightened out and you left from Cherbourg.

GOLOGOR: Right. We left from Cherbourg on the Ryndam. We saw the boat, the picture of the boat, in here somewhere. The Ryndam it was. Yes, we remembered. I remember that.

LEVINE: So then you, can you remember arriving . . .

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GOLOGOR: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: . . . in the New York Harbor? What was that like?

GOLOGOR: Well, we saw the Statue of Liberty, first of all, when we arrived we, and at that time it really had no significance because we didn't know much about it. But later on, when we came to visit the Statue of Liberty and I saw Emma Lazarus poem at the base of the hand, is it the foot, whatever, it used to be at the base as you walked in that building. But later on when I came to the Statue when it was redone, with the two entrances, it was strange. I couldn't find the Lazarus poem anywhere. And I asked someone, I asked a guard, and he told me it's on the second floor. I should go look for it over there. Well, I found it in a corner on the second floor, and I made a complaint. I said, "How come something like that is stuck away where nobody could really see it?" I spoke to one of the guards there or somebody. I don't know what happened to it since then. Is it anywhere?

LEVINE: I'm not sure where it is right now.

GOLOGOR: Where it's accessible?

LEVINE: But apparently it meant a lot to you.

GOLOGOR: It certainly meant a lot. To every Jewish person it has meaning.

LEVINE: It's a very moving poem.

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GOLOGOR: It's a very moving poem, and it really meant a lot, yes. And then when we were let, when our boat came in we were led into the building . . .

LEVINE: At Ellis Island.

GOLOGOR: At Ellis Island. No, not Ellis. Where does the boat stop?

LEVINE: Oh, in New York, in order to take . . .

GOLOGOR: In the harbor.

LEVINE: . . . a ferry. Then you take a ferry to, uh-huh.

GOLOGOR: And when we stopped and they, I think they did the examinations right there and then in that building when they stopped. And they found that my older brother had trachoma. At least that's what they said he had, trachoma. You know what that is?

LEVINE: Yes.

GOLOGOR: The eyes. So they took us all to Ellis Island. They shipped us by ferry to Ellis Island because we were quarantined. If you had trachoma you couldn't get into New York at the time.

LEVINE: So in other words they were going to just examine you in the harbor, but because your brother was suspected of trachoma, that's why they took you to Ellis Island?

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GOLOGOR: Exactly. That's why we all went to Ellis Island. And I remember Ellis Island. The beds, we were placed on one of the floors with just cots. There were at least two dozen cots, at least two dozen, if not more. And that's where we spent the night. But before we were bedded, my father came over with a little tender boat. And, of course, we hadn't seen him for seven years, so my mother introduced us from up there, from the arched window. And when I think of Joe Di Maggio advertising his parents' trip, he stands in front of that arched window and talks about them. And I remember that. That's where my mother took us over and said, "This is your father. Down below." He was down on a little tender boat, hoping to see us, hoping to take us off, but he wasn't able to until the next day. The next day he came, took us off, and we went, my father had an apartment ready for us, a furnished apartment ready for us with everything there. But we took the Third Avenue El to get there. (she laughs) It was on 69 East, no. What was the address? Yes, 69 East 98th Street.

LEVINE: In Manhattan.

GOLOGOR: In Manhattan.

LEVINE: Now, so apparently the next day it was discovered that your brother didn't have trachoma.

GOLOGOR: Yes. They re-examined him and they found him to be clear, and so we were all led off.

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LEVINE: Do you remember anything about Ellis Island, what it looked like, besides the arched window and the beds?

GOLOGOR: That's about it.

LEVINE: Were there a lot of people being processed while you were here?

GOLOGOR: Oh, sure. Oh, of course. The beds were all filled up, as I recall. We had some food somewhere. I don't recall that too well, the dining room. But we were given food for supper and breakfast.

LEVINE: Do you remember your first day in America?

GOLOGOR: Yes.

LEVINE: What was that like?

GOLOGOR: We walked up four flights to our apartment and a neighbor came out to greet us. A wonderful woman. She was heavy, but she greeted us with such warmth and she started to talk Yiddish to us so we understood, and she said, "I'm going to help you. Whatever you want, I'm going to help you," in Yiddish. And she remained our friend all the years. She's the one who said that, "You must go to school. You can't not go to school." So our mother took us the very next day to attend classes.

LEVINE: And in school were you with other children who didn't speak English?

GOLOGOR: All I know is that my teacher was so enamored with me. I had long braids,

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dark eyes, you know. And she called in all the teachers periodically to come and see the little Palestinian girl. And she would say, "Esther, get up." You know, just lifted her head, and I'd have to stand up and they looked me over, all the teachers in the school.

LEVINE: And this was before you could actually speak English?

GOLOGOR: Before I could speak a word of English. This was the first few days, the first day, the second day, the third day. And I had no knowledge, but she told me to look at the next kid's paper, and the first thing the kids did was write the date. I didn't know what that was, but I copied. (she laughs) I copied it exactly as the kid who she told me to copy from. And I want you to know that within half a year I was put into 3-A. My brother was put into 4-A. He was two years older. They gave us arithmetic problems to solve before we registered for school. So I got into 3-A. And in February I was put into 4-B, and I spoke English already. Within that half a year.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Now, did you find any kind of prejudice against you while you were here, when you were here as a child? You were well-received . . .

GOLOGOR: You mean because I was a foreigner?

LEVINE: Yeah.

GOLOGOR: I don't think so. I don't recall anything like that. I know that everybody was anxious to talk to me, anxious to ask me questions because of where I came from. And all through the school years it was like that.

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LEVINE: And what was it like being around your father, having him being absent for so long?

GOLOGOR: Oh! It was strange at the beginning. We didn't know him, and he was good to us to a point. He wasn't a very wealthy man, but he could have made it a lot easier for us.

LEVINE: In what sense?

GOLOGOR: In the way of giving us things, you know, monetary things. But he was used to living alone for so long it wasn't easy for him, too. But it was nice having a father after all these years?

LEVINE: Had he become Americanized?

GOLOGOR: Oh, of course. My father was able, he taught himself English. He taught how to write. He read the Yiddish and English papers and, oh, yes. My father was a shochet. You know what that is? A slaughterer, a chicken slaughterer. And that required skill. He was very skillful.

LEVINE: And is that what he did here?

GOLOGOR: That's what he did as his living, yes.

LEVINE: Now, is there anything else. We're getting near the end here. Is there anything that you would mention about your adjusting to America or once you got here maybe some things that struck you as unusual or odd or . . .

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GOLOGOR: (she pauses) Yes, Coney Island. (she laughs) We loved to go to Coney Island. We had cousins there, and it was such a treat. Oh, let me tell you about the first night that we arrived in the apartment. My mother's youngest brother was already here in America. He had come a few months earlier and he brought up ice cream and bananas. The two things we never had in Israel. In those years we didn't have ice cream. He brought up delicious ice cream, and it was such a treat. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: And that was the first time you had it?

GOLOGOR: The first time we had it.

LEVINE: Was it vanilla? (they laugh)

GOLOGOR: I don't recall the flavors, but I'm sure he brought us the best there was.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Let's see. I'm just trying to think if there's anything else. Well, how about when did you meet your husband?

GOLOGOR: Oh, well, that was, I was already twenty-three when I went back to Israel on a trip. I saved my vacation for three years. From the year before and the current year, and I took my two or three weeks. My boss allowed me an extra week, that vacation, and I went back to Israel. And that trip was fantastic.

LEVINE: Is that where you met your husband?

GOLOGOR: No. But I met my husband soon after I got back from that trip. We got

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married in 1920, in 1936.

LEVINE: And what is his name, or was his name?

GOLOGOR: Earucham Harry. We called him Harry. And he came from a town in Russia called Golori. He . . .

LEVINE: Oh, and that's how his name . . .

GOLOGOR: And that's why we were, actually the name was Gologorski when I met him. But he changed his name. When he passed the bar he changed his name to Gologor.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So he was a lawyer here.

GOLOGOR: He was a lawyer and a Hebrew teacher, a principal, everything.

LEVINE: We don't, we only have a few minutes, but I wanted you to say your children and their names.

GOLOGOR: Yes. My daughter is Penina. We call her Penny Wisner. She married a very wonderful man. He does art. She's an artist. She graduated Cooper Union and City College and her husband, my son-in-law Sydney, is also a cartoonist, and he just did some very wonderful cards for Shulsinger, you know, various printed cards. It's beautiful.

LEVINE: And then . . .

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GOLOGOR: And then I have a son, Aton Ethan, who's a psychologist, a graduate of City College and also, uh, he's a doctor of philosophy and psychology and whatever you want.

LEVINE: And how about grandchildren?

GOLOGOR: I have four grandsons, no granddaughters. But each one of them is a treasure. The oldest one, Michael, is a computer analyst. He's a very smart young man. He is looked upon through his firm to do things. Like recently they had an exhibit in Javitts Center, and the one who was working on the exhibit couldn't finish it in time. So they called on Michael to go right ahead and finish it up. And he did. They got it on time for the exhibit, and he got such an accolade for doing that.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

GOLOGOR: And then I have . . .

LEVINE: Just give me the names of the other grandchildren. Gary is the second one of my daughter. And he's in the films. You'll see his name as . . .

LEVINE: Director? Producer?

GOLOGOR: Art director. They're doing Hoffa right now, and he's the art director.

LEVINE: And other grandchildren?

GOLOGOR: And then my son's, one of them just entered college, Matthew, who is

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eighteen, and Benjy, Benjamin, who is fifteen. A darling kid. He was with me for the second seder, and they're all wonderful, wonderful kids. I'm very proud of every one of them.

LEVINE: Well, it's been very nice talking with you today, and we'll end here. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. It's April 29, 1992. And I've been here with Esther Gologor who came from Jerusalem to the United States in 1921 when she was twelve. Thank you very much.

GOLOGOR: I want to thank you, Janet, for this interview. It means a lot to me.

END OF INTERVIEW