

EI-300

FANNIE SIMON STOLLMAN

BIRTHDATE: MAY 5, 1906

INTERVIEW DATE: 4/25/1993

RUNNING TIME: 56:35

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME

INTERVIEW LOCATION: SUNRISE, FL

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, 9/1995

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: CHARLES MITCHELL, 4/2009

LITHUANIA, 1920

AGE 13

PASSAGE ON A HAMBURG-AMERICA LINE SHIP, EXACT NAME NOT RECALLED

PORT OF EMBARCATION: HAMBURG

RESIDENCES: TESIAI

PHILADELPHIA

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here today with Fanny Simon Stoll...

STOLLMAN: Stoll, Fanny Sherman...

LEVINE: Sherman. Fanny Sherman Stollman.

STOLLMAN: See, here it was my father changed it to Simon.

LEVINE: Yes, it was changed. Right. Okay, and Fanny came from Lithuania at the end of 1920.

STOLLMAN: On the first ship.

LEVINE: On the first ship. And you were thirteen years old. Now, today is...

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STOLLMAN: We went through Germany.

LEVINE: (???) the 25th.

STOLLMAN: We went through Hamburg.

LEVINE: Today is April 25th, 1993. And we're here in Sunrise, Florida. And I want to say that I'm looking forward because you have a lot to tell. I can, I know that already, so, let's start at the beginning, Fanny. If you could tell me your birthdate and where you were born and spell any of the names that I might not know.

STOLLMAN: 1906 I was born.

LEVINE: What day?

STOLLMAN: The 5th. Well, according to the english, the 5th of May.

LEVINE: Okay. And where were you born.

STOLLMAN: Five, five, five, five, six.

LEVINE: Yes. And where were you were in born?

STOLLMAN: In Lithuania.

LEVINE: Do you remember the town?

STOLLMAN: Telsiai. They called in "Telsheh."

LEVINE: Could you spell it?

STOLLMAN: T-E-L-C, well, there would be a, a, what do you call it, like a "ch", like a - when you say "she" with a full mouth.

LEVINE: Okay.

STOLLMAN: So, what the initials...

LEVINE: S-H?

STOLLMAN: S-H. That's it. You got it, know better than me.

LEVINE: Okay. And did you live...

STOLLMAN: We came...

LEVINE: ...in the town, in that town in Lithuania...

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STOLLMAN: In Philadelphia.

LEVINE: No. In Lithuania. You lived...

STOLLMAN: In Telsiai.

LEVINE: You lived in Telsiai the whole time until you left.

STOLLMAN: All, all the time.

LEVINE: Okay. What do you remember about Telsiai.

STOLLMAN: Well, first of all, we were in business. We were bakers. And kind of a luncheon. And in Europe all the, the people that live on, in the country, what do you call it? How do you call the people, country people in English?

LEVINE: Farmers?

STOLLMAN: Farmers. Or, who raised chickens. They come twice a week in the city, in Telsiai, we called it "Telsh."

LEVINE: Telsh. Okay.

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STOLLMAN: See? In Jewish we called it "Telsh," with a, it ends with a "z."

LEVINE: Telsh. I see.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: So they would come from the farms...

STOLLMAN: They would come from the farms and bring all their stuff, whether it was chickens, or it was meat, or whatever there was to sell in the city. And they could, and they would come in Sunday to go to church. See? But they couldn't come all the time because one person, belongs, everything belongs to him. The, the places, the people, it was like you call it, in English.

LEVINE: Like a dictator?

STOLLMAN: Not, not exactly a dictator, but the people belonged to him. They worked for the, for the main man that the whole place belonged.

LEVINE: The whole town, everything in the town belonged to one person?

STOLLMAN: It was, it was, all, it was country, not town, see. And he had acres and acres and acres and acres.

LEVINE: So he owned the land.

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STOLLMAN: He land, he owned everything. See? So my grandmother and grandfather, my fathers' parents lived in that place. And they would take all the milk, whatever the farmers gave out, and make butter, and, and cheese, and sour milk. Everything that you could make, and bring it into town. And on Tuesdays, on Fridays, and those that came in on Fridays, the Jews, was only one Jew living in the place. When they came in Friday they stayed for the services for Sunday, and went back Sunday. See?

LEVINE: What was your grandfather and grandmother's name?

STOLLMAN: Cantor. Cant, yeah, like a cantor.

LEVINE: Do you remember them?

STOLLMAN: Only my grandparents.

LEVINE: Do you remember them?

STOLLMAN: I never, I never saw my grandfathers. They died young.

LEVINE: Your grandmothers?

STOLLMAN: My grandmother lived to six, to sixty-two.

LEVINE: Do you remember your grandmother?

STOLLMAN: Of course. She lived with us.

LEVINE: Oh, she lived with you.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now is this the same who made the cheese...

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...and the, and the, and...

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...milk products?

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what do you remember about her? Do you remember any times you spent with her, what she was like?

STOLLMAN: Well, they lived in the country, as I said. And every summer I would go out to them, and stay a whole summer with them.

LEVINE: And what was it like out there.

STOLLMAN: It was nice. I mean, there was, there was no Jewish, there was only one Jew. It was no Jewish kids or anything. But I got along with everybody.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: And when the summer was over I'd go back home.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything that your grandmother did that you...

STOLLMAN: Well, that's what they did. They took all the milk, and they made butter, and, and cream, brought it into the city to sell.

LEVINE: Do you remember them doing that?

STOLLMAN: Sure. When I was...

LEVINE: Do you remember how they did it?

STOLLMAN: Yeah, sure.

LEVINE: How did they do it?

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STOLLMAN: Today they do it with machines.

LEVINE: But how did they do it?

STOLLMAN: Today, it was from wood. It was made out, how would, how should I tell you the, the shape.
Let's say...

LEVINE: Be careful of the mike. Wait, wait wait. (She adjust Mrs. Stollman's mic)

STOLLMAN: Let's say as wide as this. (she gestures)

LEVINE: Okay, about two feet...

STOLLMAN: Two...

LEVINE: ...wide.

STOLLMAN: Two pieces. And in the middle, a thing connected it, and they had the handle to turn it...

LEVINE: Oh, so they...

STOLLMAN: ...to make it butter.

LEVINE: Like a churn.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: And sour milk. And, and they brought it in Tuesdays and Fri, Fridays was the main thing, because the gentile people would come in Friday to go to church.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: See?

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, do you remember any stories your grandmother told you?

STOLLMAN: Not exactly a lot, because they were in, in little towns when they were married. My grandfather from both sides died young, especially my mother's father died very young. And my father, my fathers' parents, they were here in America, see? They were able to come to America.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now...

STOLLMAN: So they, they are, oh well, how many years are they dead? I don't know. I don't remember how many years they are dead. My husband is dead eleven years. See?

LEVINE: Now, the other grandmother.

STOLLMAN: The one, lived al, my mother's mother always lived with us. All her life.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: Because her husband died very young, and she lived all her life with us.

LEVINE: Do you remember her stories that told you, or...

STOLLMAN: Well...

LEVINE: ...things that she said?

STOLLMAN: I mean, it, the stories wasn't like today it is. It was a different world altogether.

LEVINE: Can you, do you remember anything that she told you, or ways that she was?

STOLLMAN: Not exactly.

LEVINE: What kind of a woman was she?

STOLLMAN: Hmm?

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LEVINE: How would you describe her?

STOLLMAN: Well, she was a very good person. I mean, her child, her grandchildren, nobody could be better than hers. And, and also they died young. Sixty-two today is young. See? My mother died young, too.

LEVINE: What was your mother's name?

STOLLMAN: Bela. Bela. "Behllah."

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: But in Jewish it's "Baylah."

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And her maiden name was Cantor?

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And your father's first name?

STOLLMAN: Sam. Samuel.

LEVINE: Samuel. And, and it was Sherman.

STOLLMAN: Sherman.

LEVINE: And, later changed.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you have brothers and sisters?

STOLLMAN: One brother. That's all. Me and my brother.

LEVINE: What's your brother's name?

STOLLMAN: Isaac.

LEVINE: And who is the older?

STOLLMAN: Me. I'm two and a half years older.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: Be he's, his work is for Israel. He gives his life for Israel. Whatever he does, it's all for Israel. And when my husband was alive we were in Israel, too. And he wouldn't let us go to a hotel. We stayed in his, he was like in a communion.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: So we stayed in his house. But we were in Jerusalem, we were in Haifa, we were in, oh, the first city that you come in. I met Golda Meir, I shook hands with her.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

STOLLMAN: Because we stayed in a Salvation Army hotel. And she stayed across the street in the Jewish hotel. And I'm, you know, I push myself. I went right across and shake hands with her.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Well, tell me about Lithuania when Isaac and you were children.

STOLLMAN: Yeah, but Lithuania became after the First World War was over. So Lithuania became for herself, Latvia became for herself, Russia for herself, so forth and so on. Each...

LEVINE: Be, before that what was it?

STOLLMAN: Russia.

LEVINE: Russia.

STOLLMAN: At the very, very beginning was Russia. And he still took the Jews and send them out, way, way, way out deep in Kafkaz, where it's only winter. But when it came to our city, and they were ready to send our people out, especially the men, Germany came in. It wasn't Hitler. It was real

Germans. And they couldn't touch us. So there was a little town next to that, to Telsiai, where we had cousins. The first thing they did, they ran to the synagogue and prayed that Hitler shouldn't get us.

LEVINE: Well, Hitler was the second world war. So this is before that. This is the first world war.

STOLLMAN: This is before, see?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: Hitler came in later, see?

LEVINE: 1930's.

STOLLMAN: But he had his end also. He got his end. And, and he came (???), (???) before from the, from Jews also. You know far away, far back in his family were Jews. And his sweetheart was a Jewish girl. So she got, they took her down, she went down herself to hide herself like in a cellar. And that's where she dropped dead. I'm, I'm very, you know what I mean.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, Fanny, when you and Isaac where children...

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...do you remember what you did? What did you do for enjoyment or for play?

STOLLMAN: Like, like regular children. The first thing they used to say to my mother, a boy has to get educated. A girl, she gets married, she gets a, a little older, she gets married. My mother used to say, "A girl has to get education just as well as a boy." And I went to school. I went to Gymnasia, to, to, Gymnasia's high school. And I went all the way through. See? And I was able to speak five languages. When you don't use it, you know, Hebrew, Jewish, Lithuanian, German and Russia. But when I was younger I could, it was nothing. Over here you forget even if you live.

LEVINE: What was the school like there?

STOLLMAN: The same as here. The same thing as here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And how about religion? What, what, how did you observe religious occasions?

STOLLMAN: Well, Friday the place, the store, the place was closed. Friday until Saturday night and they opened it again, see.

LEVINE: Describe the store that your, that your father had?

STOLLMAN: That was in America already.

LEVINE: Oh, not there?

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STOLLMAN: No, because over here, he went to America 19', he came to Amer, to (she pauses), I was, I was only about five years old when he left for America. I didn't even remember him.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Why did your father then? Why did he go...

STOLLMAN: To make himself better, because he couldn't re, reach where he wanted. See? He was a cantor, and he was working also. But he couldn't reach anything. So in those years was the best thing, because America still very young, see? Was the best things to go to America and build yourself. So that's what he did. But the war broke out. We were supposed to come here in 1920. The end of 1920 the war, the war stopped.

LEVINE: You were supposed to come before that?

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: So the war broke out, so we got stuck till the end of 1920. We were on the first ship to get to America.

LEVINE: And what...

STOLLMAN: Hamburg American line. From Hamburg.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh. What did your mother do when your father was in America and she was still there with you and your brother?

STOLLMAN: We were bakers.

LEVINE: Bakers.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember the bakery?

STOLLMAN: Of course. Of course.

LEVINE: Can you describe it?

STOLLMAN: Like every other bakery. We only work harder there than they work here.

LEVINE: Did you help?

STOLLMAN: I was too young. And besides my mother says you have to go to school. See? So I knew fluent, when, when the Germans came in, and I don't talking, I'm not talking about Hitler.

LEVINE: No, uh-huh.

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STOLLMAN: Ger, the real Germans. So our city was practically the first, the first is Memel, that's German.

LEVINE: M-

STOLLMAN: Memel. M-E-M-E-L.

LEVINE: E-L.

STOLLMAN: See? That's the first city to go into Germany. Our city was next to that city.

LEVINE: Oh.

STOLLMAN: But when Hitler came in there was a little town away from us. We had cousins. So they rent, they rented the synagogue and played, and prayed that we shouldn't get killed from Hitler. (she pauses) As young as I was we went through enough.

LEVINE: Do you remember anti-semitism when you were there?

STOLLMAN: Plenty. All over. Anti-semitism is all over. Even here. See?

LEVINE: Yeah.

STOLLMAN: But the, the farmers that we used to, we used to come in from the farms to sell their stuff, they were already in our (???) with the Jews. They brought it in, and most of the Jews were buy,

buying the stuff.

LEVINE: So they got along okay?

STOLLMAN: We were, we were friendly with everybody. They used to come after they sold their stuff, come in to us. We had a long, long table and long bench, and they would sit down and eat, have their lunch, have their dinner. And my, my grandmother's name is, was Esther. So they, in Lithuanian they called her Estherkaida. And my mother, here, I should you with the schebl, and my father with the yarmulke. And he was a good cantor. Even when we came to America he was a good cantor.

LEVINE: What, what does the "Kaida" mean? When you say, "Estherkaida?" What is that, "Kaida?"

STOLLMAN: In Lithuanian, instead of saying, "Esther," they say, "Estherkaida." You know they make...

LEVINE: Affectionate term?

STOLLMAN: Affectionate though, but that's the Lithuanian way, see?

LEVINE: Do you have any, did your mother, when she came to America did she hold on to some of the Lithuanian ways?

STOLLMAN: Not, well, I mean, we all hold on.

LEVINE: Like what...

STOLLMAN: But not, but the Lithuanian way of living. We were living as Jews. My fa, as I said, my father was a cantor. We were religious Jews. At came Friday, we closed the store and didn't open it until Saturday night. See? And we were able to keep open on Sunday because we were closed Saturday and Friday night. That was in Philadelphia.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: See? But my husband came, he was young, he was about seventeen, eighteen years old. He came to our town, and his, his cousins was my girlfriends. It's not like today. We used to get together in a house, boys and girls, and dance and sing, and the table, my mother always had a table full of food. And I had a piano and a phonograph, and we were living. Today the kids are not living. It's a different world.

LEVINE: Do you remember foods that your mother cooked when you were over there that you liked?

STOLLMAN: All, all, all kinds of food.

LEVINE: What in particular do you remember from there?

STOLLMAN: The usual, you know, usual food. Except Friday we used to make a special, you know, in a, in a what do you call it pot, in a...

LEVINE: Crockery?

STOLLMAN: No, no, no. In a, that heavy mat, heavy stuff?

LEVINE: Iron?

STOLLMAN: Like iron, but it's, it had a certain, it had a certain na, a certain name. And, and when it came Friday. Whoever cooked, you know whoever made, so they'd make a certain kind of food in those pots with meat, potatoes, onions, and whatever you want to put in. Not mil, milk and, milk and...

LEVINE: Meat.

STOLLMAN: ...meat does not go together in the Jewish religion. And then they would cov, cover it very, very tight, and put it into the oven over night till Saturday morning. And it was delicious. Saturday morning the people came, take, saw with the push outs, the cov, the little cover. You know, the little door from the, from the oven, and give everyone with, in Jewish we call it "cholent."

LEVINE: How do you spell that?

STOLLMAN: How do you spell it? That's a question.

LEVINE: Here. (she gives her a paper and pen)

STOLLMAN: (she pauses) With a C-, C-H-, or make it C-H-. C-H-O-L-E-N-T.

LEVINE: Now can you describe the oven? What, what did your mother cook on?

STOLLMAN: The, the same thing as you have, you have ovens in America when they put the, the, for baking in the same, they do it now, too.

LEVINE: Oh. Oh. Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: When you go into a baker that bakes you'll see the same oven.

LEVINE: I see.

STOLLMAN: And, the, what do you call it? The shovel.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: Especially when you make bagel. See, a bagel is not an American, that for, it's the last couple of years that they have bagel in America.

LEVINE: You had bagels there?

STOLLMAN: We made bagels. But when you make the bagel, first you make it, and you put it down for a little while, and then you throw it into boiling water. See? And when you take it out of the boiling water, you put it on those shovels that's it's only big enough for the bagel to put on. And you put

it right into the oven and have it browned and then pull 'em out. You pull out, you pull out the, the wooden thing, and then you get the bagels out. You push, you try and push the thing back in and get 'em out. Because America learned from us.

LEVINE: Did you make plain bagels, or did you make ba, different kinds of bagels.

STOLLMAN: No, regular bagels.

LEVINE: Regular, uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: Regular bagels. Later on, you know over here they make different, you know, but the main regular bagels was regular bagels. They were delicious. With a lot of butter. (she pauses) I was only, when my father left, I was only about five years old. I didn't even remember him. And I, I resemble him. So when I came here and he hugged me, I felt to push away. I couldn't, I could never, never think of him because I was too little. My brother was younger than me. My brother was two and a half years younger than me. So he was still a baby.

LEVINE: What was it like being with your father?

STOLLMAN: Eh?

LEVINE: What was it like being with your father when you did come over?

STOLLMAN: Well, you get used to it. You know. And as soon as I became, first of all I took English before I

came to America. When I came to America I immediately signed in night school, because it's not like today. An inspector from the government used to come to the house as soon as a person come from Europe or from anyplace to make sure that the child goes to school. Today they don't give a damn. If your child goes to school, it goes, if it don't, it don't. And we were compelled. So I said the inspector, I says, "Mister. I know already a little bit to talk English." I says, "Mister. I signed in in night school." I says, "I'm too tall to go to day, to day school." That's exactly what I said to him. He go, he went like this (she gestures).

LEVINE: (she laughs) Well, now, how did you get, what, what happened so that you were able to come with your mother and brother in the end of 1920.

STOLLMAN: Because my father was here.

LEVINE: Did he...

STOLLMAN: My father was in America. We were the first able to go.

LEVINE: He wrote to you? He sent you tickets? Or how did...

STOLLMAN: No. No. He sent us money. But in Memel, that's Germany, our landlord's son was a banker in Memel. So we came to Memel and he arrange everything for us. So then we went to Hamburg, and we came here from Hamburg. Hamburg American line.

LEVINE: Do you remember leaving your home?

STOLLMAN: Of course.

LEVINE: What did you, you or your mother take? What did you pack to take with you to America?

STOLLMAN: We packed and, we didn't real, we didn't really need it. We packed, we packed, even cushions. And it was, it was silly. See? But, you know, one lives one way, and one lives another way. So when we came here I didn't even use it. Rather my mother didn't even use it.

LEVINE: Do you remember saying good-bye to everyone?

STOLLMAN: I was just trying to tell you. They closed the, the school. It was already a Gymnasia, that means a high school. They closed the school. And all the children from school went after us like a, like a funeral. The whole school. And we had a professor. He was teaching German. And he was teaching English. And I had taken, as I said before I took English before. He was actually crying. A gorgeous looking guy. So...

LEVINE: What, what, how did you feel leaving? What was your...

STOLLMAN: I, I felt bad. But you go to your father. And when I came I didn't rem, even remember him. When he hugged me I felt like a stranger. And I, resemble him, too.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you knew about America before you came, what you expected?

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STOLLMAN: No. No. Not much. Only from reading. And, and we were hoping to go, because of my father was here. And we were very hard workers. You know, a bakery is not easy. And my grandmother was with us, and her son was here. So her son, my uncle, so her son brought his mother, and of course my father brought us. So my mother said to my uncle, he says, "Look, mama lived with us all her life. Leave her alone." She says, "No. You had her all your life. Now I'm having her." So she stayed with the son.

LEVINE: Oh.

STOLLMAN: She says, "You had my mother all your life. My mother goes with me."

LEVINE: How did your grandmother feel about that?

STOLLMAN: Well, she didn't say one way or another. After all it's her son. She was anxious to see him, too. The only thing is, they all died out young. My uncle died young, my aunt died young, my grandmother, my mother. Sixty-two today is young.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, did you, were you examined before you left...

STOLLMAN: Well I...

LEVINE: ...on the Hamburg line?

STOLLMAN: In Hamburg. But it was really nothing. And you had to take a bath, a shower, to make sure you

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go up clean in the ship. That was a must. Memories, memories, memories.

LEVINE: Do you remember, how did you get to Hamburg? By what means of transportation?

STOLLMAN: We went a little town first when we, and then we able to go from there by train to Hamburg. Hamburg, and then we took the, the ship was Hamburg American line. And we went right in there. We couldn't go into the city and stay for yourself. You had to go in like a, what do you call it?

LEVINE: Oh, like it was housing that the ship line had, had...

STOLLMAN: Not only that, but you couldn't go in the city room. You had to go there. See? When we came to Memel, before Hamburg, then we, we had our own room by private family. But from there, when we came to Hamburg we had to go in to what everybody else goes in. See? But we didn't stay very much there. We went straight Hamburg American line. Because as I said, our landlady's son was a banker and he arranged everything for us. So everything went smooth, very smooth.

LEVINE: So, do you remember the voyage? The ship, the voyage?

STOLLMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: What do remember about that?

STOLLMAN: I was throwing up. (they laugh) My grandmother didn't. I was throwing up, my mother was

throwing up.

LEVINE: Your brother?

STOLLMAN: My brother was okay. He was just a kid.

LEVINE: Well, what were your accommodations on the ship. How, where did you sleep?

STOLLMAN: Regular, you know. It wasn't a regular bed, but a, a bed that, big enough to sleep. You know.

LEVINE: A bunk? A bunk bed?

STOLLMAN: No, not necessarily. No.

LEVINE: No. No.

STOLLMAN: No.

LEVINE: Were you in a cabin?

STOLLMAN: Yeah. Our own. We had own...

LEVINE: Just your own family in your cabin.

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STOLLMAN: Oh, yes. Our own cabin. But to eat we came upstairs with everybody. We, we went with rich and poor all together. Big, big, big dining room.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: And how about the food?

STOLLMAN: It was good. I mean, European food is different than American food. And it was good. It was pretty good.

LEVINE: Well, did you have any adventures on the ship?

STOLLMAN: I was a kid.

LEVINE: Yeah. It was your first time really away...

STOLLMAN: Yeah, but they had entertainment.

LEVINE: Oh, really? What kind?

STOLLMAN: Yeah. Like singing or something, or a, a movie once in a while, you know.

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LEVINE: And were there people from all different countries on the ship?

STOLLMAN: Oh, yes. Sure, because of, you took it, it went to, if you went to Hamburg it means you go to get the boat, the ship. So it was from all over.

LEVINE: Do you remember when the ship came into the New York Harbor?

STOLLMAN: Sure. I was standing right there and shaking.

LEVINE: Waving at...

STOLLMAN: Waving. And a lot of people on the outside that had families, too, everyone went like this. (she gestures).

LEVINE: With the Statue of Liberty? Did you see...

STOLLMAN: No, we passed, I saw the Statue of Liberty. But we went right past, and we went in where the ship could land, you know. And a bunch of people outside. It's a lot of memories.

LEVINE: Yeah.

STOLLMAN: But my kids were young. You know.

LEVINE: Do you remember going to Ellis Island?

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STOLLMAN: Yeah, sure.

LEVINE: What, what was that like?

STOLLMAN: I went, I went not long ago to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Yeah. But I mean the first time when you actually came from Europe.

STOLLMAN: Yeah, so, we couldn't go too far. We could only go so far, stay there until people came and took us off. Like my father came, my uncle came. My uncle took my grandmother, my father took us. We couldn't roam around.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything that struck you about when you were at Ellis Island?

STOLLMAN: Now, now Ellis Island is different. Now they have a museum.

LEVINE: Yes.

STOLLMAN: Our name is on it.

LEVINE: Good.

STOLLMAN: See? But instead of Sherman it's Simon.

LEVINE: Tell me how that happened. How, why did...

STOLLMAN: My daughter took me. My young, my middle daughter. I have three daughters.

LEVINE: But I mean how did the name get changed from Sherman to Simon?

STOLLMAN: Because my father took it Simon instead of Sherman. So he put on the thing also Simon. They put on the wall Simon.

LEVINE: Why did he want to change it, do you know?

STOLLMAN: I don't know. I never even asked him why. As I said when I came and he hugged me, to me it was like a stranger. I didn't even remember him. I was five years old. But you know, you get used to it. He was a, he was a very good man. And a good cantor. And when he was in the synagogue doing the services my mother would kwell. And it was the, the women upstairs and the man downstairs, not together.

LEVINE: So, did you, were you examined again at Ellis Island? Do you remember that?

STOLLMAN: Yeah, but it was just nothing.

LEVINE: Nothing, uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: Because the OK was already, you know, it was...

LEVINE: The papers were in order and...

STOLLMAN: ...enough.

LEVINE: Okay. So then your father came, and you met him, and you didn't really feel comfortable with him...

STOLLMAN: Yeah. And my uncle came to take my grandmother. They wouldn't let her off unless he comes.

LEVINE: Now did your grandmother have any problem with examination or anything?

STOLLMAN: No. No, no. I mean not actually, you know.

LEVINE: Okay, so then, your fa, you went with your father. And where did you go?

STOLLMAN: We came to Philadelphia. That was our first, he was in business.

LEVINE: And what was he doing there?

STOLLMAN: What is he doing now? He's not...

LEVINE: No, no. There. In Philadelphia. What was his business there?

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STOLLMAN: We had a, over here you call it an ice cream parlor. And it was near a dance hall. And when my mother came, she wouldn't let open on Saturday. Only when Saturday was over. They closed Friday and opened Saturday night. And all from the dance used to come in for ice cream. You know, like regular people.

LEVINE: And did you work in the ice cream parlor?

STOLLMAN: Well, I was there. I was living there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you, did you work? Did you actually...

STOLLMAN: Not necessarily. No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: No.

LEVINE: So you were going to night school when you, after you first came.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then what did you do during the day?

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STOLLMAN: Sometimes nothing. And I loved to make, millinery, hats. So I didn't ask anybody. And the bus was right across the street from our, from our store. And I took the bus. And I went down on Arch Street, where all those peo, all those working places were. And I went in and I got myself a job. And it was a German. The owner was a German.

LEVINE: Did you say Arch Street, A-R-C-H?

STOLLMAN: Arch Street, yeah, yeah. So the, the boss was a German. And I didn't know what kind of excuse to give that I can't work on Saturday and I can't work on after twelve o'clock Friday. So I gave all kinds of excuses for two, three weeks. After he got wise. He says, "You foolish child. Tell me that you're Orthodox. I wouldn't stop you from working. You could come and work." So I stayed there for a while. And then I met my husband. I was very young.

LEVINE: Now, was your husband also from Lithuania?

STOLLMAN: No.

LEVINE: No.

STOLLMAN: He was from Bessarabia.

LEVINE: Bessarabia.

STOLLMAN: Bessarabia. That's, (she pauses), there's another name for it. I think, I think it's Rumania. Yeah,

Rumania by Bessarabia is, yeah, Rumania.

LEVINE: So how did you meet?

STOLLMAN: His cousin, a girl, was my girl friend. And it's not like girls are today. It was Saturday night. We got together either in my house or in their house, dance and sing and eat. And we had a good time.

LEVINE: Were there a lot of people from Lithuania, Russia, in, in Philadelphia, a lot of people from your part of the world?

STOLLMAN: Well, quite, yeah, quite a few. One was there a millinery store, which they gave from their family to us to come and give them regards and, and you know. So it was not far from us, see? That was in Philadelphia. But my, my husband was a New Yorker.

LEVINE: Oh.

STOLLMAN: He didn't like Philadelphia. So after while we got married. We were, we moved to New York.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: And that's where I was until...

LEVINE: You came to Florida. Tell me about what you did in the millinery shop. What, what kinds...

STOLLMAN: Trim. Trim the hats.

LEVINE: Trim, uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: Yeah. Trim the hats.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And could you compare what it was like where you lived in Philadelphia to the house you lived in in Lithuania?

STOLLMAN: Sure.

LEVINE: What, what were they like?

STOLLMAN: It's entirely different.

LEVINE: Yeah. What's the difference?

STOLLMAN: (she pauses) How can I explain that? As I said we were bakers. So we lived on the ground floor. And that's where the oven was able to be, see? But then upstairs was a hairdresser right over us. And the landlord, like we are here (she indicates), and right here, the same building, but right over here they had a store of, of everything that you use for writing.

LEVINE: Stationery?

STOLLMAN: Stationery.

LEVINE: That was next door...

STOLLMAN: That was the boss, the landlord.

LEVINE: Landlord.

STOLLMAN: A big, big store. And toys and other things. Whatever you needed, you get in there, you went there, you got it.

LEVINE: And...

STOLLMAN: It was, it was good, you know it was, it was pleasant. And I loved dancing. Food, forget it. Just give me dancing. So it was a lot of people that came from Europe, you know. So right away there was made a club. And boys and girls would get together, and we would dance and have a wonderful time.

LEVINE: Were, were they like folk dancing? What kind of dancing? How would you describe...

STOLLMAN: No. Regular dancing. Regular...

LEVINE: Like waltzing and...

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STOLLMAN: Waltz. It was, you know, regular dancing like even like a dance now. It's not ages, see? I came the end of 1920. And now it's '93. So I'm past, I'm seventy years already in America. So I was kid. But the kids in Europe are different than here.

LEVINE: What's the difference?

STOLLMAN: A big difference. Over here when I see some youngsters it's terrible. Absolutely terrible.

LEVINE: What, what are they lacking here that you remember from...

STOLLMAN: They have more, they have more freedom to go bad over here.

LEVINE: What, what, were your parents strict with you?

STOLLMAN: In a way.

LEVINE: What way were they strict?

STOLLMAN: They never beat me, God forbid. I ran down once, we had, as I said we had an uncle there, and he, his wife went to another big city to get money to buy out the son he shouldn't go into ar, to the army. So money you get everything. So she got stuck over there. She couldn't come back. And they remained where they were. So we took care of them. See? It's not, it's not like families here. So we made sure that they should have what to eat. Then there was a shortage in flour.

LEVINE: A what?

STOLLMAN: In flour. For baking. So they used, they got cards that they could get a quarter of a pound a person a day. Like four people gets a pound. Six people, you know. And you had to make do that much food. And as I said we were bakers. And in the main, in the parlor what you call, we had an oven, a fancy oven.

LEVINE: Tile? Was it made out of tile?

STOLLMAN: A oven. A fancy oven. And it was from the, from the floor almost, no, the ceilings weren't that high, almost near the ceiling. So in order to save bread for that uncle, we took a big loaf of bread and we put it on top of that oven. And we forgot. A year later we found the, the, the ov, the, the loaf of, that round loaf of bread. A whole year later. (she pauses) You know, you can't forget those things. When I talk to my kids it's unbelievable. But...

LEVINE: So, what was, what was the place you lived in in Philadelphia? How, how was that different? You were telling how that was different...

STOLLMAN: My hus, my husband. My father had his own home. He had a, a, you know. And the store was right there with the building. And the second floor was rented out to a tenant. And the third floor was three room, two rooms, one for us and one for the kids. See?

LEVINE: How, do you think you were as comfortable in Philadelphia as you were in Lithu...

STOLLMAN: I was. I had a lot of friends.

LEVINE: Yeah.

STOLLMAN: I made friends very fast. Over here I don't care.

LEVINE: Do you think your father did what he wanted to to build a better life? Do you think he did that here...

STOLLMAN: Yeah. That's why he went, that's why he went to America.

LEVINE: And he was successful at doing that?

STOLLMAN: Yeah, in a way. Yeah. He wasn't a millionaire. But he was comfortable.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. More comfortable than he had been?

STOLLMAN: It was a, a different life altogether. See? But when my mother came she said immediately, Friday and, Friday after twelve and Saturday has to be closed. So it was closed. So we had to sell the place and go in a Jew, in a Jewish neighborhood.

LEVINE: Ah.

STOLLMAN: See? And that was, that was it.

LEVINE: So what was your husband doing when you met him?

STOLLMAN: Hairdresser.

LEVINE: Do you remember why you liked...

STOLLMAN: And, and, and my, my mother didn't want that.

LEVINE: Oh, why didn't she?

STOLLMAN: Because my mother wanted a rabbi. And my, as I said, my uncle and aunt came from Russia. We gave them our business. I said that before. So she was trying to shay, to send a fellow that goes to Yeshiva, Yeshiva means where a Jewish boy goes, to send for mir a "hussen." A...

LEVINE: Husband.

STOLLMAN: A husband. But I already had met my husband. I said, "This is it."

LEVINE: They were going to send from Russia somebody?

STOLLMAN: From Europe. She was going to send over a rabbi. I should marry a rabbi. See?

LEVINE: Do you remember what you liked about your husband, why you liked him enough to marry him?

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STOLLMAN: He was, he was a gentleman. And good looking. Let me see if I got. (she looks for a photo) His, his cousin was my girlfriend.

LEVINE: So did your mother and father become citizens. (Mrs. Stollman continues to search for a photo)
That's okay. We can, we can look after...

STOLLMAN: No, it's right over here. No.

LEVINE: Be careful of this. Be careful. (Mrs. Stollman hands her a photo) Oh, this is your husband. Oh, what a lovely picture. He looks so young.

STOLLMAN: He was. He was eighteen, I was seventeen.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So he had come from Rumania.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And he had been in this country for a little while before you met.

STOLLMAN: Yeah. Well, I mean, his whole, his whole family was here.

LEVINE: Oh, I see.

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STOLLMAN: See?

LEVINE: So, how long did you stay in Philadelphia after you were married, before you moved to New York?

STOLLMAN: Really not too long, because he didn't like Philadelphia. He liked New York.

LEVINE: And he was from New York.

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: He was living in New York.

STOLLMAN: I mean he was originally from Europe.

LEVINE: Right. Right.

STOLLMAN: But he liked New York. There was more life. Philadelphia is a quiet city.

LEVINE: So where did you move to in New York.

STOLLMAN: Where did we move? I think we moved first downtown, because his, his parents were there, there too. Yeah. First we moved downtown. And things didn't go so, too bad, too good. You know. There was a very, it was a depression.

LEVINE: Oh.

STOLLMAN: See? And it was very hard. And he got himself a job. And you didn't make a hell of a lot. But we made do. Then we came to Philadelphia.

LEVINE: No. When you came to New York, you lived downtown in Manhattan?

STOLLMAN: I, we lived downtown...

LEVINE: On the lower east side were you?

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: And from there we went to, we moved to the Bronx.

LEVINE: Oh.

STOLLMAN: And I let, I had to pay money to get in to the apartment. You couldn't get an apartment. But my daughter was living there. So through her he did me a favor. He only took a hundred and fifty dollars.

LEVINE: I see. Well, tell me now the names of your children.

STOLLMAN: My oldest one is Irene. She's sixty-six. And she has a grandson of twenty-two. My great-grandson. The middle one was just, they are two and half years apart, between the oldest and the middle one.

LEVINE: And what's her name, the middle one?

STOLLMAN: Rita. Rita Ratest. He writes books.

LEVINE: What's his, her last name?

STOLLMAN: Ratest. R-A-T-E-S-T. So he writes a lot, a lot of his books is around. And he, he teaches philosophy.

LEVINE: Now do you have grandchildren? Does Rita have children or grandchildren?

STOLLMAN: Yes. She has two sons. That's the two sons I showed you.

LEVINE: Oh. Okay. And, and what about your third daughter?

STOLLMAN: She has a son and a daughter. He's an a...

LEVINE: What is her name?

STOLLMAN: The son is attorney, and the daughter is a teacher. She has two children, a boy and a girl.

LEVINE: What is your third daughter's name?

STOLLMAN: That's a good question. Zelda, but she calls herself Vickie.

LEVINE: Vickie?

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, what was your husband's name?

STOLLMAN: Jack.

LEVINE: Jack. Okay. So, Jack Stollman.

STOLLMAN: That's right.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, when you think back about coming to this country, when you were young and living your life out here, how do you think that affected your life?

STOLLMAN: I don't know. I, I don't know. It was a mixture. First of all my mother didn't want me to go to work. So I says, "I'm going to work." And I got dressed, and I went downtown, and I found

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myself a place. And it happened to be German owner. But came Friday, I couldn't work. Only half a day. So I gave an excuse, "I don't feel good," or whatever. One Friday, two Fridays. It came the third Friday, he comes over to me. German, but a, a gentleman. He says, "Why do you always get sick on Friday?" So I had to tell the truth. She says to me, "You foolish child. If you tell me that, I wouldn't stop you." And I worked there for nice couple of years. After that I got married, I had children, I went back to work. And I worked in big places already.

LEVINE: Also in the millinery line...

STOLLMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...when you went back?

STOLLMAN: Always. Yeah. And then millinery got very slow. People didn't wear, wear hats, if you remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, Uh-huh.

STOLLMAN: I mean, even your time. So it's short, all kinds of short hair. So I went ahead, I found myself a different place. And I was making boas. Feather boas.

LEVINE: Oh.

STOLLMAN: You know, that you (she gestures).

LEVINE: Oh.

STOLLMAN: So I learned that. I made boas.

LEVINE: Are there any customs that you still keep that stem back to Europe and to Lithuania, any, any things that you do...

STOLLMAN: Well, Friday, I keep, I keep Saturday. Friday I used to put on candles Friday. But I'm afraid. If I go down, I will not go down and leave candles. So over here I'm afraid, specially when you live in a place like this. I'm not alone. I'm with, with a lot, a lot of old people. So I don't take no chance. Unless when, when it's a, a anniversary of the dead. So I put on and I stay here until, then I put it out, and then I go down. (she shows a candle)

LEVINE: Oh, I see. That's the candle you like.

STOLLMAN: You see?

LEVINE: I see. Okay, well, we have a little bit of time left. Maybe you can tell me anything else that you'd like to say before we close.

STOLLMAN: Whatever you ask me I'll answer you. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah. How about this time of your life. Do you think about the past?

STOLLMAN: All the time.

LEVINE: Yeah?

STOLLMAN: All the time. I'm up nights. And cry with myself. (she begins to cry) See? Because this is not for me. Most of them is with ca, with canes. Cripples. Old. There isn't a week that someone passes away. And there isn't a week that an ambulance is not in front of the door. I hardly go out. I eat out breakfast, I come back, and I stay in my room. And, and also people that, one, one came in the same day with me. We sit at the same table. She was already four times in the hospital. Now she didn't, she's not by the table again. And it all works.

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah. You said you did volunteer work.

STOLLMAN: Yes. In the hospital, in a, in an old age home. I stayed between two beds, and feed one with one hand and the other one with the other hand. And the ones on, on, what do you call it chairs?

LEVINE: Wheelchairs?

STOLLMAN: The wheelchairs. So one of them specials you (???), "Oh, the angel." Just like that. (she gestures)

LEVINE: What are you most proud of in your life?

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STOLLMAN: I don't know. I'm proud that I brought up my children with education, with pride, with respect, each and every one of them. Can I ask any better?

LEVINE: Well, I think that's a perfect place to close. Thank you very much.

STOLLMAN: You're very welcome.

LEVINE: I've, I've been talking with Fannie Stollman...

STOLLMAN: Right.

LEVINE: ...and this is Janet Levine, and I'm signing off for the National Park Service.

STOLLMAN: Okay. And I, will I have a copy?

LEVINE: Yes. (she laughs) Absolutely.

STOLLMAN: Good.