

EI-342

MARGARET (MARGIT) SINGE GIEBITZ

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HUNGARY, 1910

AGE 7

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Friday, July 2nd, 1993. I am in East Berne, New York.

GIEBITZ: East Berne.

SIGRIST: Southwest of Albany, with Margaret Giebitz.

GIEBITZ: Giebitz.

SIGRIST: Ms. Giebitz came from Hungary in 1910.

GIEBITZ: That's right.

SIGRIST: She was six.

GIEBITZ: That's right.

SIGRIST: Anyway, thank you for having me come out to your house.

GIEBITZ: You're welcome.

SIGRIST: Let's begin, Ms. Giebitz, by you giving me your birth date.

GIEBITZ: Uh, my birth date is April the 6th. Actually I was born on the fifth in the middle of the night, so I can say fifth or sixth.

SIGRIST: And what year?

GIEBITZ: 1910.

SIGRIST: What year were you born?

GIEBITZ: Oh, 1903. April the 6th.

SIGRIST: That's right. And where were you born in Hungary?

GIEBITZ: I was born in Budapest, along the Danube River. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Now, were you just born in Budapest or . . .

GIEBITZ: In a hospital, a small hospital near the bridge, and I was named after the bridge, Margit, M-A-R-G-I-T. When I came to America it was Margaret.

SIGRIST: But you were named after the bridge.

GIEBITZ: The doctor said that Mother was going to call me
Lizzie or Mary.

SIGRIST: (he laughs) Can you tell me, were your parents
living in Budapest or outside the . . .

GIEBITZ: Mother was a maid with very wealthy people. And when
she met my father was, naturally before I was born.
Is that all right? Is that all right? And, uh, they
were about . . .

SIGRIST: Do you know how your parents met?

GIEBITZ: Yeah, at a dance.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you know about that.

GIEBITZ: Well, all the people out there danced. That's part of
their living. And then they'll have their beer or
wine, and that's about it. Beer and wine. But Mother
was a very outgoing person, although she never learned
to read or write or go to school because she had to
mind children. (whispering) Is that all right?

SIGRIST: You're doing fine. Was she born in Budapest?

GIEBITZ: She was born in Pustavom. Pusta means "pleasant valley." Pustavom. Sound nice. There's all great fields there, and that's why everybody had wine. The water was so bad that they drank wine for dinner.

SIGRIST: What was your mom's name?

GIEBITZ: Elizabeth Singe.

SIGRIST: Can you spell her maiden name?

GIEBITZ: Well, it, I think it was S-I-N-G-E, or S-I-N-K. I don't know. I have it somewhere on a birth record of my grandfather, George Singe, who died a year before I was born. And Mother first took me out there to Pustavom when I was three years old and came to America. I only spoke Hungarian, and Grandmother spoke only German.

SIGRIST: Were they German?

GIEBITZ: German descent, yes. But in Hungary they were what they call Austria-Hungaria. So they have villages where there's a lot of Germans and some, but in school you had to learn Hungarian. So the first language was Hungarian, and when we came in it was a Catholic school. We said, "(Hungarian)" "God Bless Jesus,"

or something like that. And I did speak Hungarian until Grandmother couldn't understand me. I had to learn the German. (a telephone rings) Oh, dear.

SIGRIST: We're going to pause the interview just for a moment.
(break in tape) We're now resuming with Margaret Giebitz. Tell me what your dad's name was.

GIEBITZ: Emil Lucas.

SIGRIST: Can you spell Emil?

GIEBITZ: E-M-I-L, L-U-C-A-S.

SIGRIST: That's his middle name?

GIEBITZ: But the "S" is always the "SH" in the Hungarian language, and he was Hungarian. That's where I get the dark skin. Mother is blonde.

SIGRIST: What do you know about your father?

GIEBITZ: Not much, because my mother took off for America after I was three years old. And he had four children that he never told her about, and to this day I don't know who he is or where he is. He must be dead, of course.
But the name in Budapest is very important. There's a lot of that name, Lucas. And here in America, too.

So from what I gather, I was out there twelve years ago with my oldest son Bob Giebitz. He's a Kuwanis. Is it all right? A Kuwanis president.

SIGRIST: Well, now, wait a minute. So when you were a kid, your last name was your mother's maiden name.

GIEBITZ: That's right.

SIGRIST: I see.

GIEBITZ: She took off.

SIGRIST: Was that one reason why she went to America, to get away from your dad?

GIEBITZ: Yes. She was shocked when he told her he had four children, and I was on the way.

SIGRIST: Do you have any recollections of him at all that are yours?

GIEBITZ: Not even a picture. It's very sad. Mother was not that, she never thought it was important for her child to know her father, which was wrong. When I was a child, she never told me until I grew up.

SIGRIST: Was your father, at that time, living nearby? There

was no communication between them?

GIEBITZ: I imagine he had a business. He was a locksmith. He was no dummy. (she laughs) And so she decided, after her father died, to take me to her mother. And I could not speak, she had me boarding from the time I was born.

SIGRIST: Boarding with whom?

GIEBITZ: With a Hungarian lady which I never got her name because I was only three years old at the time, and spoke Hungarian. And when I, she took me to my grandmother. She had a nice big home there, because my grandfather was a carpenter. He had two houses. One burned down. And so my aunt had to interpret my Hungarian to German to my grandmother until I started school and, well, she spoke only German.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you remember about being a young kid with your grandparents?

GIEBITZ: Well, I'll tell you. It's a very sad story, because the aunt was an epileptic.

SIGRIST: This was your mother's sister.

GIEBITZ: She was in charge of me.

SIGRIST: What was your aunt's name?

GIEBITZ: Eva. Eva Singe. She, oh, wait a minute, Marx. She married a hometown boy, and he was so wonderful to me because he didn't leave me alone with her not even half a day. That is, he was a musician and he played with a band. And he always took me along, so that's where I learned to dance at age six.

SIGRIST: So this would be Eva's husband, and his first name was?

GIEBITZ: Yes. Uh, Michel. Mike, Michel.

SIGRIST: Michel Marx.

GIEBITZ: Michel Marx, yes. In German you say, "Michel."

SIGRIST: And they lived with your grandparents?

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes. They took over the house, because Grandmother was old and feeble. She walked with a cane. She wasn't that old. She was in her sixties. And, uh . . .

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your grandmother? What did

she look like?

GIEBITZ: Oh, she was a wonderful lady, and good-looking. I have some pictures. I'll show you later.

SIGRIST: Tell me what sticks out in your mind when you were with your grandma.

GIEBITZ: Well, she never left my side. She wouldn't let my aunt do anything to me, because my aunt was a mean woman when she'd start drinking wino, wine.
(she laughs) See, the water was so bad I used to see the little bugs on top of the water, you know, the thing that you push down and up, the bucket. And there would be little bugs around. (she laughs) I don't know what they were. I couldn't say. But my aunt was so mean to me because she never had a child.
And Uncle Michel Marx was very good to me, as I said before. And so when Grandmother died, well, I'll go before Grandmother died. Um, my aunt was putting tomato juice in bottles, and she took the old, the new sieve, and Grandma said, "No, Eva, you don't use the new sieve. That's for other things." You know. So, well, my grandmother walked with a cane, and she was going to hit her. (she whispers) Is it all right

to say that?

SIGRIST: Yes, go ahead.

GIEBITZ: And down came a shelf on top of my head. My uncle was home. He had to take me to the town, because this is just a little village. The county seat was about three miles. So we had to go with the horse and buggy to have this, I still have the scar here.
(she gestures) That's one of the things.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how they treated you?

GIEBITZ: My uncle was very good to me.

SIGRIST: I meant medically, when that happened to you.

GIEBITZ: Oh. Well, they healed it up. I don't know with what. But a second time I got these two fingers into the bowling, the ball bounced on my hand at the musical hall there, the Town Hall. And I had my fingers down like this, (she gestures) nosy little girl, you know. And down, and they had to take me again. See these fingers? There's no arthritis in there, but there is in this one, and they healed. And that's when my mother learned about how mean my aunt was. But Grandmother had already died then, and I used to

walk up to the cemetery and cry, and it was very sad.

Another time I walked away and wanted to put my feet into the dike, they called it, a big body of water, and I slipped in and almost drowned, and they pulled me out and pumped me out. And they took my clothes off and dried it because my aunt would have killed me after I got home. (she laughs) Is that all right I can tell you these stories? How can I forget that, a little child. I see my little grandchildren, how mischievous they are, and they get away with it because here in America you're not supposed to hit kids. But I got it.

SIGRIST: Now, what do you remember about your grandfather? Was he dead already by the time . . .

GIEBITZ: Yes. He was dead. I never even saw a picture. They didn't take pictures then.

SIGRIST: You were three when you went to live with your grandparents.

GIEBITZ: That's right. And at age six Mother came, when she heard all these stories, after Grandmother died, I think I was five when Grandmother died.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your grandmother's death?

GIEBITZ: Well, I found her on the floor and I had to run to the neighbors. She was dead. She just closed her eyes and she was gone. I tried to shake her, she was gone. A six-year-old child, a five-year-old child.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the funeral or the wake or anything like that?

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me about that?

GIEBITZ: Well, the priest and the altar boys came with their gowns on. They had the cross. This is Catholic, you know. And they walked all the way to the cemetery, and me trotting on behind the grave, behind the coffin. How can you forget that? I was a lost child after she died.

SIGRIST: Well, now where is your mother at this point?

GIEBITZ: My mother's in America, from age three.

SIGRIST: So . . .

GIEBITZ: She had to get work because she did not get married.

But she did get married that year, before she went and got me. They had a job with very wealthy people. He was a gardener and she was a cook.

SIGRIST: This was in America.

GIEBITZ: Yes. And she decided to go over and get me. But in order to bring me in, you couldn't get off of that big boat. There was a, some wood between a small boat, and then to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your grandparents' house in Hungary?

GIEBITZ: Well, it was all on one floor, and all peasants lived that way at that time.

SIGRIST: Can you describe what that looked like?

GIEBITZ: Yes, yes, because I was, well, I didn't see that house when I was out there ten years ago. Bob took me to Pustavom.

SIGRIST: What is it that you remember about the house if you were to describe it?

GIEBITZ: I remember it the way it was, because it wasn't there ten years ago. It was burned down by the Russians.

And I talked to the lady next door. I said, she says,
"(German)" "What are you looking for?" That's
German, (German). I said, "(German)" That means,
"I lived here." And can I say what she said?
" (German)" I said, "Yeah, yeah." Because Mother
brought me there when I was three, with little ribbons
in my hair, a pretty little dress and everything.
Mother was a very dainty lady. She looked beautiful
always, my mother.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about the house? Can you
describe the house?

GIEBITZ: We'll go back to the house. So the front of the
house, the windows opened up outside that way.
(she gestures) And, uh . . .

SIGRIST: Like cottage windows.

GIEBITZ: Yes. And in one corner was a big table. On the other
side is a bed. There was no living room. And then
there's a second section where the children would
sleep. It's a long, very long place of living. And,
well, there was a dirt, outside there was no, like we
have here, nice roads and everything. Way in back was
where all the barrels of wine were, where they brought

the grapes in. And I remember jumping on the grapes, on the wagon barefooted, you know. And, well, now they put them through a press, but in them days they did them the old way. (she laughs) And then, of course, they put them in the vats to ferment and make the wine. Now, let me go back to the house. So the second part was for the chickens and the goats. They had goats and pigs, and this all, a long building.

SIGRIST: It was all attached.

GIEBITZ: All attached, one to the other, and so on and so forth. And then in back is this great big hill where the wine, the big doors of the wine cellar, it was quite large. That went into the, they built that into the mountain. And then you could go up around the building there, and go right to the cemetery. But when she was buried we had to go around the town. This was a regular procession. And all the people that knew her all followed. Now, if you can picture that, they've all got these little babushkas on, and the little blouses and big skirts, because they wore petticoats in them days. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Can you describe what the peasant clothing was like

more specifically?

GIEBITZ: Yes, because mother, I had to take all these fancy clothes off, because I didn't look like the rest of the kids, so Grandmother started sewing for me. She made little blouses for me and little gathered skirts, and little petticoats. But they did not wear a panty. And when Mother brought me with these little ruffled bloomers, I said, "Only boys wear that stuff!" Now, look at me, I'm back to pants again. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me what traditional peasant costume looks like?

GIEBITZ: On what they called fashing, that's Lent.

SIGRIST: How do you spell that?

GIEBITZ: F-A-S-H-I-N-G. Fashing. That's, after Lent, after Easter, or for Easter they wore, they have skirts that they only wear at this certain time, and they're all starched, the petticoats, and real fancy skirts, and blouses. And then they have the white little shirts with little gathered, well, you've probably seen them on pictures. And then just a little jacket over it, and the full skirt. And when they had dances, oh, my

gosh. (she laughs) Boy, I'll tell you, those skirts really went. But really when you think of it, they're all different now.

SIGRIST: Was this colorful clothing?

GIEBITZ: Yes, very, very. They bought, there was one store just with yard goods, because everybody sewed. There was no such thing as going to the store and buying. I have three closets full now. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: You mentioned a little bit before that they had animals, goats and things.

GIEBITZ: Yes.

SIGRIST: What sticks out in your mind, as a kid, about the animals? Is there a story that you remember?

GIEBITZ: I know we had a rooster, and of course when the hens were brooding they didn't lay no eggs. (she laughs)
And the goats, we just had two goats, and, well, they used to milk them, and it was darn good milk, and that's what I lived on. Hey, listen, I was so healthy, when I came to America they thought she rouged my cheeks, I had such red cheeks. I drank a lot of cider, and even light wine. They didn't mind

giving children a little wine, but I'm not a, I don't drink now.

SIGRIST: What do people eat in Hungary? When you were a kid, what did you eat?

GIEBITZ: Well, only once a week they had chicken, on Sunday. Chicken soup, or chicken paprika. It's Hungarian.

SIGRIST: Can you explain to me . . .

GIEBITZ: I cook all that stuff.

SIGRIST: Tell me how you made chicken paprika?

GIEBITZ: Well, you want to know? Really?

SIGRIST: Sure, we want it on tape. Tell me how your grandmother might have made it at that time.

GIEBITZ: Oh, my mother, and even, I still make it even now. It's better than just boiled chicken. It's, you cut your chicken pieces smaller. If it's an old chicken, because they had a lot of old chickens. They never killed young chickens because they wanted them for eggs. But I would, first of all, you'd chop up one good-sized onion, and you saute that, and then you put

paprika in. And then you take each, all the pieces. If you have too much in one pot you just brown them good all over. Then you take them out and put the others in. It all depends how much onion, if you can use two onions if you like a lot of onions, but I don't, see. And also a little garlic, maybe one clove of garlic or two, good-sized ones. About like this (she demonstrates), you know. And then you add water, you add tomato juice and you, salt and pepper, paprika. Paprika is very important out there. I'm never without it. See, that is not sharp. See, red pepper is sharp, but paprika is mild, and it gives it a good taste. Well, then, after you've cooked that chicken and stirred it, see that you don't lose all your juices. You should have enough juices on there to make a thick gravy with a little flour and a little water, and then before serving you'd take about a half a cup of sour cream and you put that in your gravy. Oh, and that you serve with little tiny dumplings. They're not called dumplings. They're called noklre.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

GIEBITZ: I guess, N-O-K-L-R-E, noklre. Or spatzle, in German. spatzle.

SIGRIST: And these are flour and water, basically.

GIEBITZ: Yeah. Oh, and eggs! Don't forget, yeah. And my grandmother would take a big wooden board with a handle and she would cut little pieces this way (she gestures) and she'd snip, snip, with a knife. And while the water's boiling, and the only stove we had there was just a little stove. The rest, she baked bread everywhere. Oh, what good bread she baked. Great big loaves of bread.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your grandmother baking bread? Tell me a little bit about the process?

GIEBITZ: Well, first of all, it all depends how much flour you want. Now, say you're baking at least three loaves of bread. They always baked for the whole week, you know. And they lived in bread and sausage, smoked sausage, see, pork. That's why they have the pigs, see. Then they'd smoke all that meat, and in the winter they'd have more meat, but in the summer that's all gone. So they eat more or less on farina noodles. Noodles is a must. I've been making noodles all my life until only now that I'm alone, see. Because the store noodles are not the same. Is that all right to

put that on?

SIGRIST: Tell me about, tell me about the baking of the bread.

Tell me about the baking of the bread.

GIEBITZ: Oh, well, first of all, she had a great big bowl, oh, about this size. (she gestures)

SIGRIST: Wooden?

GIEBITZ: Yes, yes. And she would put, um, let's see. She would, oh, gosh, she would put in about eight cups of flour or more, ten maybe, to make three loaves of bread. And then this is the hearth. A big, it's all covered, it's kind of, I don't know what it's made out of, cement or what, but it's white. It's whitewashed. And then she had this long handle. She would shove it in, and she would first throw cornmeal in there, and see where she puts the loaves after they've, because after it raises you've got to work it again to make it into, first it's just a great big hunk of dough. And that's flour and water and salt, and maybe a little lard, because that's what they had, leaf lard. See, when they killed a pig, they put that all in the crocks. The Italians used oil, but they didn't use that much oil.

SIGRIST: Is this a dark bread or a white bread?

GIEBITZ: No, this is a white bread.

SIGRIST: It's a white bread.

GIEBITZ: But they can make the rye bread, too. But it's a good, solid bread, like the Italian bread that you can buy now in the store, but it doesn't stay as long as.

And when she served it, she never served a loaf of bread without making the sign of the cross.

"(German)" And then we made the sign of the cross.

And at night I had to kneel down and pray. And to the day I got married to Paul, who was a Lutheran, I knelt down on my wedding night (she laughs), to pray. He says, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm praying." (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Was your grandmother a religious woman?

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Tell me some of the other ways that you practiced your religion at home.

GIEBITZ: Well, we . . .

SIGRIST: You prayed before you went to bed.

GIEBITZ: Oh, absolutely. We prayed, before every meal we prayed. I can still pray German.

SIGRIST: Is there some other way that your grandmother wanted you to practice your religion at home, maybe telling Bible stories or something along those lines?

GIEBITZ: Well, we didn't, Catholics don't use a Bible. They only go on catechism. They believe in going every month to say if you have any sins, you know. And I did that even after I got married in New Jersey. We still went to the Catholic church. And when Aunt heard that I was going to the Lutheran church with Paul, I could have married the devil himself. Why are people like that? Look at all these religions we have today.

SIGRIST: Let's get you back to Hungary here. (he laughs)

GIEBITZ: Oh, you want to hear all about that, yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you, you said you know your prayers in German. Did you ever learn any prayers in Hungarian? Or by the time . . .

GIEBITZ: I can only say the words when we went into pray, when we went into the school, I mean. That's (Hungarian). I said that before. (Hungarian) But we had to, we had to march, well, I'm talking about after we got here I went to the Catholic school.

SIGRIST: Well, we'll get to that when we get you to America.

GIEBITZ: Yeah. And so in church the children weren't allowed to sit on the benches. We had to, the floor was all marble, little marble, it looked like marble, and we had to all kneel down. And I'd get so tired of kneeling I'd kind of hunch back, you know. And that's the way it was. They were very strict with the children.

SIGRIST: How did they celebrate Christmas in Hungary? What do you remember about that?

GIEBITZ: They do not know about Santa Claus. It's Kris Kindel. It's a lady, and she's all dressed in white. And she has fruit and candy and oranges and nuts. That is your Christmas. There are no toys. Grandmother made me a rag doll, and that rag doll was torn by my aunt. When my mother came to get me, they fought over me. She pulled the earrings out of my ears because she

said she bought them and I can't have them. The woman was . . .

SIGRIST: Are young girls' ears pierced in this part of the world?

GIEBITZ: Oh, definitely. I had, these are pierced since I was born in the hospital.

SIGRIST: That's traditional.

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes. And I had earrings, little bits of earrings, you know. These were bought in Mexico. Well, they're made a similar way. You see, they're foreign.

SIGRIST: But that's typical of young girls . . .

GIEBITZ: Here. Look at this, see.

SIGRIST: . . . in Hungary, that . . .

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Their ears are pierced when they're very young.

GIEBITZ: Yes, yes. Especially, (she laughs), well, they say it's good for the eyes. I don't know whether it's true or not.

SIGRIST: Well, now. So you said you went to school one year when you were in Hungary?

GIEBITZ: Uh, I don't know if it was a full year because my mother came, must have come when I was seven. See, I thought, because I went right into the first grade. They didn't have no kindergarten in (?).

GIEBITZ: So your mother came back in 1910 to get you.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me what you thought when you saw her, because did you even remember who she was?

GIEBITZ: No. I, I can tell you exactly. She came off that carriage. She had a big hat on, a great, big hat. And, of course, they wore corsets, and she was quite well-endowed. And I said, "Oh, auntie. Tanta, (German)." A pretty lady, (German). And she got out and she looked at me, she started to cry. I was full of lice. I was dirty. They had such a big battle over me that I could cry today yet. I remember. She's tearing me one way and my mother's tearing me the other way. (she is moved)

SIGRIST: When your mother came back, how long did she stay before . . .

GIEBITZ: She didn't stay overnight. She just grabbed me and took me. And she had a suitcase of American clothes for me. She took me to a cousin, and there they gave me a bath and cleaned me up.

SIGRIST: Well, what are you thinking during all of this? Here's this woman, just comes and grabs you . . .

SIGRIST: Well, I didn't know. I was flabbergasted. Let's say I was shocked that this lady's coming, a fancy lady's coming to get me? And my aunt couldn't care less. Because my mother was so, she was so immaculate, so clean. I never saw such a clean person. I told her when I'm getting married I'm going to go and be real dirty. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Now, when you were, when your mother was still in America did you know that you had a mother in America, or did the aunt just sort of pretend that you were hers?

GIEBITZ: No, no. This is what got my aunt so crazy. She thought my mother would never get me. And she says, "You owe me money. You never paid for her." So there they are, the two women, fighting over me. So my mother said, "You're going with me. I'm your mother."

"(German)" Ahh.

SIGRIST: It's only you. You have no brothers or sisters.

GIEBITZ: No, she never had other children. No, no.

SIGRIST: This must be actually kind of an awful thing for a little girl to have to go through.

GIEBITZ: It was, terribly . And the stepfather was so, well, we'll go back to the boat, when I got off.

SIGRIST: Did he, well, but he didn't go back to Hungary to get you, did he? Was he with your mother when she came back to get you?

GIEBITZ: You mean my stepfather?

SIGRIST: Your stepfather.

GIEBITZ: No, no. He was working.

SIGRIST: He stayed in America.

GIEBITZ: But he came with his boss to get me out, and my mother.

SIGRIST: Right. But he did not come to Hungary with your mother to bring you.

GIEBITZ: No. But he was also a foreigner. He came from where they're fighting now, Cravasi, Croatian? He spoke Slavish.

SIGRIST: So tell me about getting to know your mother before you got on the boat, before you came back.

GIEBITZ: Well, I'll tell you. When I was on that boat, oh, when, all right. We came to the uncle and aunt. They lived, oh, maybe a few blocks, well, it's not hilly. It's all level there, very level land. And they had a very nice home and everything, really nice. And so there they cleaned me up, and they had the doctor, they took me to the doctor to see if I was all right. I was healthy, but I was a dirty little girl. (she laughs) I had, I guess they had to scrub me, because she never washed my hair or anything. And, you know, kids had lice.

SIGRIST: And you weren't even allowed to take anything with you, right?

GIEBITZ: No, no.

SIGRIST: You know, anything that was yours.

GIEBITZ: Nothing.

SIGRIST: And your mother just basically kind of swooped you up and away you went.

GIEBITZ: Took me. Oh, my mother had sent from Budapest a doll cabinet, like. My aunt took this thing and smashed it on the floor. And, well, I just ran out of there. I was, it was just too much for me as a little girl. I didn't know what was going on. And you know that had me so upset that, well. I don't want to tell you that on the thing. (she whispers) I wet the bed, for a long time. Because I'm scared.

SIGRIST: Well, I'm not surprised.

GIEBITZ: Taking me to, they took me to Bremen, from . . .

SIGRIST: How long did you stay with the uncle and aunt?

GIEBITZ: Oh, only about a week, till all the people that knew her, they all came to see her. We had a regular party there, see. But my aunt was, she should have been put away, believe me. She was, my mother just actually saved my life because she'd have killed me. She beat me up terribly.

SIGRIST: Now, is this your mother's brother that you'd gone to

stay with?

GIEBITZ: No, her, that's another story. Her brother came home from Budapest. He had a good job. I don't know what he was. But he went to get a bottle of wine, a liter of wine in the town. It was, right near the Catholic church there was a town, a store where they could buy sugar and coffee and whatever they needed. And so he got a bottle of wine, but the men had to go in this basement. He had a cellar, a basement, where he kept the wine bottles. And he wanted, that was before I was born, this happened. And the man sent a boy to have, Frank was his name, Frank Singe, to come back. He wanted to see him. He says, "You robbed me. I'm missing some money." He says, "I certainly did not. Somebody else must have done that." And they got into such a fist fight, he killed him, killed my mother's only brother. And my grandfather said, that's a good story, I got to tell you this. He said, "We're no thieves in this family. We may be poor, but we're no thieves." He went to the county seat and had the man arrested. And came to their town court, and he said, "My son had money when he came. He didn't have to rob anybody."

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END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

GIEBITZ: The justice there was that the man was falsely beating him up and killing him. So the man, till the day he died, had to give to the orphan's home because my grandfather would not accept the money. He just wanted the town to know that he was an honorable man.

Now, isn't that some story, a man that has worked all his life for his family. He had, see, there was a son and the two daughters. And he just couldn't stand it that this man was going to get away with it. His name was Doltz, D-O-L-T-Z, Doltz. I don't know what the first name was. But that, I only heard that after I got older, see. I didn't know that. Because I asked my mother. I says, "How come you didn't have a brother?" She says, "I had a brother." That must have been awful.

SIGRIST: Well, that shows what kind of a character your grandfather was, too.

GIEBITZ: Yes, yes, yes.

SIGRIST: So you think you left from Bremen?

GIEBITZ: That's right. We took a train. I think that was from Budapest, we had to take a carriage at that time. Because that was only forty miles, where this town is, see. And there we stayed in a hotel overnight, and then we got on, and my mother couldn't even read or write. How did she get around like that? She was a very smart woman. That woman could cook like you wouldn't believe. They made apple strudel years ago. You pulled the dough all over the table. It's tissue-thin, what they call strudel now is nothing like that. (she laughs) And, uh, and the woman never could read a cookbook.

SIGRIST: Now, so you think you took the Pretoria? You think that was the name of the boat?

GIEBITZ: I think so. It might have been the one that she took before. But when we got on there, guess what? On account of me they wouldn't let her upstairs. She was in steerage, and she was so sick. They'd bring a big bowl, a wooden bowl with sauerkraut and pork, and she couldn't take that. Don't forget, she was a lady. She worked for very fine people all her life as a cook. Not a cleaning woman, as a cook. And so . . .

SIGRIST: What did you think when you saw a boat? Was this the first time you'd ever seen a boat?

GIEBITZ: Oh, listen, she bought me a pair of shoes, because I didn't have any shoes. I was barefooted up to then, except some velvet shoes that you wore only on Sunday, see. And then she bought me a pair of shoes and I ruined them on the boat, because that boat was going like this. (she demonstrates) It wasn't level like today's boats. And the big fish! I remember the fish jumping up, great, big fish. I don't know what they were. I couldn't tell you. And the water would come on the, what do you call it, the top of the boat? The deck, yes. And everybody knew who I was, though. I mean, the people that would watch me, because she was took sick to even get up and walk around. She threw up, you know.

SIGRIST: Can you describe where you slept on the boat?

GIEBITZ: Yeah. Well, then we went on the next, she complained that she's not used to living like that. Because, oh, there were, and the women wore skirts, and they called them Schleppe. The back of this skirt was low. You could almost mop the floor with it.

SIGRIST: A train.

GIEBITZ: Yeah. Oh, is that what you call them? Well, they were Schleppe. (she laughs) And they'd be all dirty unless they'd pick them up while they're walking. And I never saw anything like that, because they didn't have that kind of clothes in the little town there, you know. So I learned a lot on that boat.

SIGRIST: You were used to peasant clothes.

GIEBITZ: So then my mother said, "My daughter is clean and I want to get out of this hole here." In German, she said it, and we got on the second floor, up, you know. And there I slept with my mother.

SIGRIST: Now, you said because of you they put you down in steerage. Why was that?

GIEBITZ: All children had to go down there that wet the bed and stuff, see. But it must be that my mother was very good to me, and all of a sudden I didn't. But when she brought me to America I started over again, being lost. And the kids were so different than I was, you know.

SIGRIST: It's the trauma, I think.

GIEBITZ: Yeah. I'd wake up in the night and I'd think I was out in Europe, you know, and I'd start to cry. It took me about a year to adjust to American living.

SIGRIST: How long was the boat trip?

GIEBITZ: Oh, God, three weeks.

SIGRIST: Do you remember there being a storm on the boat?

GIEBITZ: I remember the boat going like this. (she gestures)
But we were down in that hole down there. We couldn't see nothing, you know. But she got so seasick, but it didn't bother me at all.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how they treated your mother's seasickness, if they treated it?

GIEBITZ: No, no, they didn't. She just didn't eat.

SIGRIST: Was there a dining room in the boat for people to eat?

GIEBITZ: No, they bought bowls of stuff, wooden bowls.

SIGRIST: And you ate there, too.

GIEBITZ: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And I don't know what we drank. I

guess we got milk. I don't know. I don't remember. But anyway, when we got to America they put us in this cage in Ellis Island. I called it a cage.

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes! My mother, she was feeling better already, because the boat wasn't so, you know, ripply. She says, "(German)" I don't know what she called it, Statue of Liberty. "That means we are free." Honest to God, I remember her saying that. And I didn't know what she meant by being free, you know. I only learned that after. And to this day I think I'm a better American than a lot of them that are born here, because when I sing God Bless America I'm in tears. You see, I feel I've been very blessed to live to be ninety and be as healthy. But I saw so much drinking as a child with that stepfather. And what happened, I told my girlfriend, he put me on his lap . . .

SIGRIST: Let's get to all of that. So tell me about Ellis Island and what you remember about Ellis Island.

GIEBITZ: Well, they put us in the cage there. (she laughs) I call it a cage. There was a wire fence all around. All these people were all shoved in there. And I

remember just holding on to that wire and looking around and looking to see the people. And all of a sudden I see a man coming with a straw hat, a caty, as they called it, and a red tie. I can see him yet. And he was a good-looking man, and he came with his boss, and that's the only way I got in. Because you could not come in unless you had a sponsor. And, of course, he was a good worker. But after, let's see, I think I was about eight, we had a three-room apartment.

SIGRIST: Were you at Ellis Island for any length of time?

GIEBITZ: No, no. They were there waiting for us, they were waiting for us. And then I don't know how we got to Passaic.

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything else about Ellis Island? Do you remember what it looked like?

GIEBITZ: Well, it wasn't like it is today, naturally.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Do you remember what time of year this is when you came over, what time of year?

GIEBITZ: I think it was either April or May, somewhere around

there.

SIGRIST: So you probably have turned seven by this point.

GIEBITZ: Yes, April 6th, yes. But, see, I always said I was six. Well, I was six up to April, see. So anyway, Mother was glad to get off the boat. And then we went to the place where they worked, and somehow or other he got a job in a factory, and my mother went off working every day, and she couldn't speak English. She'd go to the wealthy homes, you know. (German)

SIGRIST: So she's doing a different job than being a cook when she came here.

GIEBITZ: She had to take care of me. There were no babysitters. Oh, first we came to his sister, that's right, in Passaic, and it was near the school. And she, the sister, his sister had two little girls, Lizzie and Rosie. (she laughs) And they were two and three years old, and I had to mind these kids, and I was only going on seven or was seven. And if I didn't do the job, she'd give me a good botch on the behind. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: When you were at Ellis Island, because your mother had

been sick, did you have to undergo any kind of examinations, you or your mother?

GIEBITZ: Yes, yes. We had to, I think I had shots for diphtheria or whatever. But I don't think they had any nurses on that boat. They probably had a doctor.

SIGRIST: I thought that once your mother, because she had been sick, once you got to Ellis Island maybe that she had to be . . .

GIEBITZ: No, no. But I had to have shots. Because she was in America before, see.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you were wearing when you got off the boat?

GIEBITZ: Oh, she had a suitcase full of clothes for me.

SIGRIST: But do you remember what specifically you were wearing?

GIEBITZ: Well, uh . . .

SIGRIST: Or do you have a dress from that time period that sticks out?

GIEBITZ: I have a dress. I can show you a picture.

SIGRIST: No, but in your mind is there a dress that you remember from that time, when you were a little girl, that sticks out in your mind?

GIEBITZ: Yes, a skirt and a midi-blouse. It was white with stripes and stars on. Regular sailor outfit, you know. And the skirt was pleated. That's the one thing that I remember. But she always dressed me well. In them days, well, if you didn't sew, you got a lot of hand-me-downs, too, from the people she worked for, see. Oh, and God, she made me wear stuff I didn't want to wear. I mean, I was only a little kid. This stuff was for older children, you know.

SIGRIST: So once she brought you to America her life changed.

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Because she then had to give up her cooking job to take care of you.

GIEBITZ: That's right, that's right. Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: So, all right. You started telling me, and I interrupted you. So go ahead with your story.

GIEBITZ: Well, as I said, we went to the aunt. And then, oh, I

remember it was Christmas time that we were there. It must have been in the fall when we got in. Because I remember now all of a sudden that we were all in bed already, and Kris Kindel was coming. No Santa Claus.

(she laughs) And she had something over her face, but I recognized her hair. I was a smart little one, you know. And she changed her voice terribly. And she says, "Are you good children?" In German, you know. And she says, "If you're naughty you get a stick. If you're good you get candy and oranges and all fruits and stuff." And she threw it on the floor, and we all grabbed, the little ones. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Was your stepfather German or Hungarian?

GIEBITZ: He was Austrian.

SIGRIST: Austrian. What was his last name, again?

GIEBITZ: Adolph Evonkovitch.

SIGRIST: Oh, boy.

GIEBITZ: E-V-O-N-K-O-V-I-T-C-H. Thirteen letters, was I glad to get rid of that name! Mother got married again, you know, in Wisconsin, and he was very good to me. And I was adopted.

SIGRIST: That's much later.

GIEBITZ: Yeah.

SIGRIST: All right. Well, tell me what life was like that first year or so in America.

GIEBITZ: Well, we had an apartment. I mean a flat, no heat, the kitchen stove, that's all we had, and two bedrooms. There's no living room. You ate and lived in the kitchen until you went to bed at night. That's all they could afford, you know.

SIGRIST: Was there electricity in the apartment?

GIEBITZ: No, lamps. I'll tell you, well, that goes later, when they had gasoline lamps.

SIGRIST: Gaslights.

GIEBITZ: Gaslight, yeah, gaslights, and they were on the wall, see. And, of course, you have to take the chimneys off because they smoke, you know, and you fix the little tape, you know, where the light comes out. And, well, she went out to work every day then. She did cooking and washing and everything. But when she came to America she didn't know where to start after

she gave up the job with her husband, see. So she went out by the day, and I was on my own.

SIGRIST: You said they put you into first grade.

GIEBITZ: Yes.

SIGRIST: Was that as soon as you got here?

GIEBITZ: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: Tell me what school was like for you. What was it like getting adjusted.

GIEBITZ: First of all, we had to pray. Oh, we marched to the church, and we had to pray.

SIGRIST: This is Catholic school.

GIEBITZ: Yes, with the nuns. And oh, dear, I hate to tell you this, but they are mean. She was mean. I had to go to the outhouse. I had to go so bad, and I kept putting my hand up, you know. And finally she let me go. She said, "All right." So I didn't come in.

(she whispers) Because I wet myself.

(she laughs) And, you know, you can't forget those things. And when I did come in she says, "Where were you so long?" She says, "Hold out your hand." And

she took that big ruler and she ripped my skin right open. When I got home and she saw this, she took me right to the priest. And she says, "I'm taking Margit out of school. I will not have my child misused." So, and that was the end of the, she had to pay every day, seventy-five cents a week.

SIGRIST: Do you remember trying to learn English or how . . .

GIEBITZ: Oh, I learned so fast.

SIGRIST: How? Tell me how.

GIEBITZ: Well, it didn't take me long. I don't know how, uh, see, those nuns spoke German, too. It was a German Catholic school.

SIGRIST: Was there a large German population in Passaic?

GIEBITZ: Yes. And not only that, but they all bunched together in the same dance halls in the same saloon for drinks. And that's what it was, see. And, well, then when she took me out I went to a public school. There she didn't have to pay.

SIGRIST: How long were you in the Catholic school?

GIEBITZ: Oh, golly, I guess only one term, that's all. And

then she put me in Public No. 5, No. 10. That was two schools that were very close together, but one of them was for smaller children and the other one, then I went into No. 10, I went there as far as the fourth grade. And then we moved to Wisconsin when Schueler, uh, Evonkovitch was put in jail for molesting. He didn't do anything bad, but enough that would have led to something, you know.

SIGRIST: Now, he and your mother never married, or did he marry?

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes, in the Catholic church. Oh, yes, they were married, yes. But, you see, she couldn't get married to Schueler for eight years or seven years, I think, because he didn't die.

SIGRIST: This is once you went to Wisconsin.

GIEBITZ: Evonkovitch was put into an insane asylum because the woman that shot him, she shot him through, this was written to me.

SIGRIST: A woman shot him because he had molested her daughter?

GIEBITZ: He raped her. She was fourteen. Her daughter was fourteen, and the woman had a gun, and she shot him.

This was written to us. I had it for the longest time on the paper.

SIGRIST: And you said he was a mean man.

GIEBITZ: Oh, yes. He was a drunk. He was an alcoholic.

SIGRIST: Was he mean to your mother or just to you?

GIEBITZ: Evonkovitch?

SIGRIST: Yes.

GIEBITZ: Oh, my gosh, he threw the beer in her face one day at the table out of the glass because it had a little nick in the glass, and he threw it in her face, and my mother wouldn't take that either. She went after him, and they had a free-for-all. I went for the police. And that happened again after he was put in jail. He got out again, and then I used to have to call the neighbor lady to call the police every time. Then, when he came back, he was like a madman. He let the canary, is that all right I tell you all this? I see this picture yet. He took a hammer and smashed up the stove. He threw things. So my mother pointed to me to go get the cops. Well, I got to the door and he grabbed me and I got the worst beating you ever saw

for a little child. When I went to the neighbor lady, she said to the police right there, she says, "You get that guy out of here before he kills her." See? Now, you see, I always felt that I had a guardian angel, because I was so Catholic, you know. And I'm still living. I still pray.

SIGRIST: Well, now, was he nasty right from the very beginning?

GIEBITZ: He was a little bit cracked. Something was wrong with him.

SIGRIST: Why did your mother marry him?

GIEBITZ: He was a good-looking man. She wanted a husband, she wanted a father for her child. But she didn't know his background. The sister was a lovely lady, and her husband, they were awfully good to me. Only that she reprimanded me when I didn't take care of her kids. I wanted to play myself. But then Mother had me boarding with other people on account of Evonkovitch. He kind of surmised that he had ideas. And so I was with about two different people during that time.

SIGRIST: Is this, tell me how you felt at that time?

GIEBITZ: I was a lost kid.

SIGRIST: Was this a happy time for you?

GIEBITZ: No, no. I prayed for God to help me all the time,
honest.

SIGRIST: Did you want to go back to Hungary?

GIEBITZ: Huh?

SIGRIST: Did you want to go back to Hungary?

GIEBITZ: Oh, no, no, no.

SIGRIST: So you knew that this was better than that.

GIEBITZ: Yeah. The children, and they all had playthings that
I never had and stuff, you know. I never remember any
toys, except a doll that she got where she worked.

SIGRIST: Your mother.

GIEBITZ: And that's another thing she did. I didn't have the
work done, and she took that doll and tore it. Oh,
that's way after. I was already twelve years old, I
was making clothes. I did a lot of sewing.

SIGRIST: But, so your stepfather, he was put in jail. He was
let out of jail. He sort of, they let him out.

GIEBITZ: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And then tell me how he ended up in the insane asylum.

GIEBITZ: Well, when she shot him, he landed in the hospital.

SIGRIST: This woman was a neighbor, or . . .

GIEBITZ: Uh, no. We were already in Wisconsin when this happened.

SIGRIST: Oh, I see.

GIEBITZ: We got away from him when he was in jail, because he threatened to kill us.

SIGRIST: So you moved to Wisconsin when he was in jail.

GIEBITZ: We went to Scheboygan.

SIGRIST: And that was about four years after you got here, right?

GIEBITZ: (she sighs) Uh, let me see.

SIGRIST: You were in fourth grade.

GIEBITZ: No, wait a minute, wait a minute. I was with my aunt and uncle on the farm. There were four children there. They had Martha, Tessie is still living. The

others are all dead.

SIGRIST: Are you still in Passaic? I just want to create a time frame.

GIEBITZ: No, we went to Wisconsin when he was in jail.

SIGRIST: Right.

GIEBITZ: That last time when he beat up, you know, let out the canary and all that.

SIGRIST: What I'm asking you is how long after you got here was he put in jail?

GIEBITZ: I was then already twelve years old. I was in fourth grade. And mother got my report, you know, card to take along to Wisconsin. We had to get away, because he would have gotten out and done something terrible. And that's when we, I still wrote to my girlfriend. I was writing. Hey, I learned very easily. In fact, I think I, my diction is better than a lot of kids that come out of high school now. They don't know how to spell, either. (a clock is heard in the background)

SIGRIST: Now, you moved to Wisconsin once he was in jail.

GIEBITZ: I was twelve. She put me on the farm, and she went out again to work for wealthy people. We had no home. Then she wanted me back with her, so she met Schueler.

SIGRIST: So she stayed in Passaic?

GIEBITZ: No.

SIGRIST: She went to Wisconsin to . . .

GIEBITZ: She took me to Wisconsin, put me . . .

SIGRIST: You both went to Wisconsin.

GIEBITZ: On, about, from Scheboygan it's about thirty miles where the farmland was. Uncle Tony . . .

SIGRIST: Why Wisconsin, of all places?

GIEBITZ: My mother's sister was there. She put me on the farm, and then she made her own life, started over again, see. We left everything in New Jersey. We didn't take nothing except a trunk full of clothes.

SIGRIST: Your mother's sister who had lived in Hungary, or is this another sister?

GIEBITZ: This is the sister she went to live with when she left

Pustavom to Budapest. She was a boot cleaner. You know, the men used to ride horses and they were so, and they call them chima. Boots all the way up to the knees, and they had, like, knickers.

SIGRIST: How do you spell chima?

GIEBITZ: I don't know. Well, as you say it. C-H-I-M-A, chima. And she was only then ten years old. And another thing, in Budapest, when the girls had their room they never had a key to lock the door. And if they had sons that needed, had an urge, they would use some of the girls. (she whispers) And they were all Jewish people that were the higher-up. That's why they had that big war in Germany, because they took over on a lot of things, from what my mother told me. There were good ones and bad ones. Well, it's the same all over. Look what we have here in America.

SIGRIST: All right. So you're in Wisconsin.

GIEBITZ: Yes, on the farm.

SIGRIST: Can you give me a date when you were there?

GIEBITZ: Well, if I was fourteen and I came in at age six, that's four years later. No, wait a minute, I was

twelve. (Mr. Sigrist laughs) I'm getting rattled, too.

SIGRIST: I'm confused here.

GIEBITZ: All right. I was twelve.

SIGRIST: You were twelve.

GIEBITZ: And then I went to the country school, and we each got a honey pail full of whatever we had, peanut butter and jelly or cheese or something. These were honey pails. Those were our lunch pails. And we had to walk a mile to school, and look what we had here in Byrne now. We have so many buses.

SIGRIST: Well, now, was this a happy time when you got to Wisconsin?

GIEBITZ: Yes! Oh, I loved my brothers, my cousins. And my brother, Frank. But there again, Uncle Tony was a very bad man, too. He misused Grandma a lot, Aunt, I mean. She was very much like my, oh, when I saw her the first time I thought I saw my grandmother. And she loved me more than her own kids, and she, "Oh, (German)." "You poor little child," she'd say. "What's going to become of you?" Being my mother ran

away from her husband, you know. And when my mother told the story, she didn't blame her. But my aunt was not a well woman, and she'd put this big bowl of noodles on the table, and always soup. She could make soup out of anything, just flour and water and onions and a little vegetables and a few noodles in there. It was a soup. Anything that they had, you know. The same kind of living as they had in Europe. They had pigs, and made sausage. They smoked the hams.

SIGRIST: Much more rural kind of . . .

GIEBITZ: Yes, yes. And now this farm, he got it real cheap, and he had a lot of woods there. And he cut the trees down to make land, so he had more land. It was right on Lake Michigan, and we could go swimming across the road. It was a road right along there. So I enjoyed it there, and, uh . . .

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever regret coming to this country?

GIEBITZ: No, no.

SIGRIST: Considering she went through such Hell.

GIEBITZ: No, she finally, wait till I tell you what she all did. After she saved a little money, she rented a

place in Scheboygan Falls. Scheboygan is also on the Michigan, on Michigan. See, the farm where my uncle was way, oh, about thirty miles up along the lake. Lake Michigan is very large, you know. And so, now, where am I now?

SIGRIST: Your mother saved up some money.

GIEBITZ: Yes. She worked out for a while and left me on the farm there. I went to school there one year. And then she got an upstairs from people that she knew from Europe, and the people lived downstairs, and we had three rooms upstairs, four rooms, I think we had. Because she got Schueler and another guy to board with us to pay the rent. But I'll tell you to this day, what's going on today, people living together, I had to sleep with my mother every night. I couldn't go anywhere, because she didn't want people to talk. But she needed the money, and they both had good jobs in Koeller of Koeller. Have you heard of that factory? Well, they, that was a very Dutchy town, from Germany. And he didn't want the houses, some of the houses. He had them moved away. He sold them for five hundred dollars. My mother bought one, and she was able to pay, make the payments with keeping

boarders. But her hands were still good, but she got very crippled. And I had to help her comb her hair and braid her. She had a big head of blonde hair, and she'd put it around her head. It had little combs on this side. She was a pretty woman.

SIGRIST: She'd gone through so much, you know

GIEBITZ: Yes. But she still wanted better things. My mother was not one that was dirty in her ways. She was so clean. We had a tub in the kitchen where we had to have, I got the first bath. And then she, well, the men had to go out there. There was a place where the men could go, like from Koeller to shower and stuff, you know.

SIGRIST: Are you talking about Koeller, K-O-E-L-L-E-R?

GIEBITZ: Yes, Koeller of Koeller.

SIGRIST: The faucet people?

GIEBITZ: Not just faucets. They made, they had all kinds of machinery there, too, farm machinery and stuff. But it's, Koeller of Koeller was between SScheboygan and SScheboygan Falls. Now, can you imagine me remembering all this? And then, when I was fourteen,

didn't she get a job for me. I had to go to work. She took me out of school. I was in the seventh grade. That's all the education I had.

SIGRIST: What was your first job?

GIEBITZ: First it was in the, in a pea canning factory in the summer. But then when she took me out . . .

SIGRIST: Pecans?

GIEBITZ: Pea canning factory, peas.

SIGRIST: Oh, pea. Canning peas, okay.

GIEBITZ: Yeah. And then we made a song (she sings), "I'm forever picking thistles, picking thistles out of peas. They come so quick, they make me sick, sometimes I think I'm going to quit. The boss is always scolding." Is that all right? "He's scolding all day long. I'm forever picking, picking thistles out of peas." They come on a big vat. Well, that was my first year.

SIGRIST: How much did you make?

GIEBITZ: Well, then the war broke out.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how much you made?

GIEBITZ: Oh, gosh, for that? I think ten dollars a week.

SIGRIST: We have only a couple of minutes left. I have some specific questions for you.

GIEBITZ: Oh, yeah. Because I worked at a shop and the boss took me home. Then I was a cook.

SIGRIST: During World War I, you mean?

GIEBITZ: Yes.

SIGRIST: Tell me quickly. You have one minute.

GIEBITZ: One minute! Oh, my goodness. Well, I was crying because when I came home I had to wash dishes, I had to darn socks, and do this and that. Well, then I decided I don't like this job. I was crying. I cry very easily, as you can see. And the boss is coming by, Mr. Karsty. "Little girl, you want to look out?" Oh, I was on a screw machine. I made bolts, threads on both sides of the rods that I put in, a little lathe. He says, "Don't you like your work?" I says, "No!" I was real mad. He says, "Well, what do you like to do?" I says, "I like to cook." "Oh, you can

cook?" "Oh, sure. I've been cooking since twelve." He says, "Listen, we need a little girl like you." He goes in the office, calls his wife. She says, "Bring her out." I come home, I said, "Ma, I'm quitting my job. I'm going to cook." She says, "You ain't going to get the money you're getting here. You're bringing home twenty dollars now." I only got ten in there. I says, "Well, I don't care. I'm old enough to go to work, and you can do what you want." I got real nasty. And I made sure the boss that was taking care of us, our foreman, had a nice, big red car. I wanted the neighbors to see I had a date. I was going on fifteen then, don't forget. I was a young lady. They took me, I was there till I left and came here and got married. So that's the end of the story.

SIGRIST: Oh, and not a moment too soon here. We're just out of time. Mrs. Giebitz, I want to thank you very much for telling us your story.

GIEBITZ: I said some things I shouldn't have said, though.

SIGRIST: No, everything was great, and we got you through your immigration experience, which is what we wanted.

(Ms. Giebitz laughs) I want to thank you for

inviting me here.

GIEBITZ: And I don't have a date with the doctor, so. See, now Paul didn't come at all, and my daughter couldn't come down. She works for Caldwell Banker.

SIGRIST: Well, we'll talk about that in a second. This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Margaret Giebitz on July 2nd, 1993 in East Berne, New York.

GIEBITZ: And she's in good health.

SIGRIST: And she's in great health.

GIEBITZ: Except the eyes.

SIGRIST: She can sing and everything.

GIEBITZ: Oh, you haven't heard me sing. I've got an organ, you know. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Thank you very much, Mrs. Giebitz.

GIEBITZ: Listen, I got a . . .