

EI-473

ISRAEL GOLDMAN

BIRTHDATE: JULY 14, 1902

INTERVIEW DATE: MAY 17, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 50:10

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: ROY SWANSON

INTERVIEW LOCATION: BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, 3/1996

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: CHARLES MITCHELL, 3;2010

RUSSIA, 1910

AGE 8

PASSAGE ON "THE NOORDAM"

PORT OF EMBARKATION: AMSTERDAM

RESIDENCES: BOBRUYSK (BELARUS); BROWNSVILLE, BROOKLYN, NY

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Goldman is the husband of Diana Goldman, Interview EI-474. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of Oral History, 2/7/1996

LEVINE: Okay, Mr. Goldman, why don't you say your name and where you were born.

GOLDMAN: I, my name is Israel Goldman. I was born in the city of Bobruysk in, in Minsky Gubernia [PH] they call it. Min, that is the...

MRS. GOLDMAN:Minsk.

GOLDMAN: ...Go, the...

MRS. GOLDMAN:Goberna, that's means it's the state, the state.

GOLDMAN: The month of, the state, you, you keep quiet there.  
In the state of Minsk. It's, it's White Russia,  
right, but it isn't really.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, now, what year were you born?

GOLDMAN: In 1902.

LEVINE: And your birthday?

GOLDMAN: July 14th.

LEVINE: Okay. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic) So that makes, that  
makes you ninety-one years old today.

GOLDMAN: I was in July, yes.

LEVINE: You were ninety-one. And today is May 17th, 1994.

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And this is Janet Levine for the National Park  
Service, and I'm here in Brooklyn, New York with Mr.

and Mrs. Goldman. I'm going to speak with Mr. Israel Goldman first, and then we'll be doing an interview with Mrs. Goldman after this today. Okay, well, tell, did you live in Bobruysk up until the time you left Russia?

GOLDMAN: Yes.

LEVINE: What do you remember about it?

GOLDMAN: Well, it's quite a big town because there were two railroad stations, one on each end of the town. And it was a fortress town. I think if I'm not mistaken, I think it's in, Bobruysk is mentioned in, in the Napoleonic wars. Napoleon had trouble there on that Berezina. The river Berezina runs through the town. So I read somewhere [sic] about Napoleon having real troubles there, and, because he came there in the dead of winter, and he had a job crossing the, the Berezina.

LEVINE: Do you remember the Berezina as a little boy? Do you remember anything about the river?

GOLDMAN: Yeah. I remember the bridge that I run over there. It was a, like a foot bridge. Not exactly, well, no, it was more like a, it was, it carried the traffic, too. It wasn't one of those very big bridges, you know. It was just a flat bridge like. It carried all kinds of traffic, which at that time was not much. Horse and wagons, you know. And all around the area there was like, it was like a fortress town. They had, there was an area where there was like a, like earthworks, you know. That must have been used at one time or another because, because there was an arsenal in that area and everything.

LEVINE: And osler [sic]?

GOLDMAN: An arsenal.

LEVINE: Oh, an arsenal.

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GOLDMAN: And I used to go out there and play as a kid. It was

like a rolling hills, because it was like earthworks that were put up and lifted.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you...

GOLDMAN: And...

LEVINE: Do you remember what you played as a child? What kind of things did you do?

GOLDMAN: No, I don't remember what kind of things. (he laughs)  
I remember going there, though. And I used to, the town itself, there was a, quite extended, you know, with buildings all around. At the time I, we were leaving that same year, they were building a whole block of buildings, and they were working on the brick work, putting it up. And we had one big, one big street that was called "Nevsky Prospect."

LEVINE: Nesky [sic]?

GOLDMAN: Nevsky.

LEVINE: Nevsky.

MRS. GOLDMAN: Nevsky. Like Broadway here.

LEVINE: Nevsky.

GOLDMAN: And they, all the big merchants were on that. There was even a Singer Machine Company store there. And there was hotels, there was a movie house. At that time I didn't go to the movies, I was too young then. But I remember there was a movie house, and they had those klieg lights burning on the outside at night. It'd light up the whole place. So I remember quite a bit of the town, because I, as a child I got scarlet fever, and I was taken to the hospital there. So we went down that street. There was a big church there and cemetery and all that. So I can remember it was pretty extended, you know. Not, there was an area that, there was a fire at one time, and the whole area got burned down. Yeah. You know, it's so much to remember, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember about the scarlet fever? What, what happened when, when you got the scarlet fever? Can you describe...

GOLDMAN: Well, I was taken to the hospital, and I, I was there for quite a while I think. And finally I was brought home.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about the medical care that you got?

GOLDMAN: No. I don't remember anything about that. But I do remember coming home one time, being left alone in the house one time. And suddenly I was alone in the house, and the clock we got on the wall was ticking so, it seemed to be ticking so loud that I got, suddenly I got, I got scared, and I had to go out of the house. (he laughs) So I, we lived in the area where like a, it was like a big yard...

LEVINE: Yeah.

GOLDMAN: ...and there were little places all around, little cottages all around, I suppose.

LEVINE: Oh, like a big courtyard...

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...with the houses around it?

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what was your house like?

GOLDMAN: Oh, I don't know. To me it was just two, two or three rooms, you know. They seemed big to me, you know, because I was only eight years old. (he laughs)

LEVINE: Did you have brothers and sisters?

GOLDMAN: I have, I had an older sister, three years older than I.

LEVINE: And what was her name?

GOLDMAN: Mary.

LEVINE: Mary. And...

GOLDMAN: And...

LEVINE: ...what was your father's name?

GOLDMAN: Morris.

LEVINE: And your mother's name?

GOLDMAN: Rebecca.

LEVINE: And do you remember your mother's maiden name?

GOLDMAN: (Mrs. Goldman off-mic) I, I'm, I'm, maiden name was Okun. O-K-U-N.

LEVINE: And let's see, did you have grandparents?

GOLDMAN: I had, we lived with a grand, my, my mother's grandfather, grandfather.

LEVINE: Your mother's...

GOLDMAN: My grand...

LEVINE: ...mother's father.

GOLDMAN: My mother's father, yeah.

LEVINE: What do you remember about them?

GOLDMAN: Well...

LEVINE: What kind of people were they?

GOLDMAN: Well, he was a very religious man with a long beard, and tall. And he was a, a shoemaker. So he used to manufacture shoes. He used to buy the uppers and complete them, sell them, sell the shoes all, all done.

LEVINE: Where would he sell them?

GOLDMAN: I, I don't know. All I know is that he did the work, and I...

MRS. GOLDMAN: Private people, I guess.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, and what was he like with you? What was your grandfather like?

GOLDMAN: We, he was very nice. We used to go to synagogue together. (a rustling noise) He used to take me to the pub, we had public baths. And I went, I, I attended the Yeshiva myself. So it was quite a distance to walk. And I used to walk to, to the Yeshiva there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GOLDMAN: And I remember the walking home in the evening from the Yeshiva. It was quite a long walk.

LEVINE: Were you by yourself?

GOLDMAN: I don't remember going with anybody, no. I must have been going by myself.

LEVINE: And what would you see walking back through?

GOLDMAN: I don't remember.

MRS. GOLDMAN: It was a "chayde," [PH] I don't think it was a Yeshiva.

GOLDMAN: It was more than a chayde. It was...(Mrs. Goldman off-mic)...it was, it wasn't a chayde, Dina.

MRS. GOLDMAN: Okay.

GOLDMAN: It, it was a whole building of classrooms.

LEVINE: Okay, so, you went to the, you went to the school at, at what age? Do you, were you...

GOLDMAN: I must have started when I was six.

LEVINE: Six. So you were there for a few years before you left.

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And, and, and what were the public baths like? Can you describe it?

GOLDMAN: It's like the Turkish baths here. They use the same methods. They have, you know, the, do you know what a Turkish bath is? Ever been to one?

LEVINE: No. I never...

GOLDMAN: Well, a Turkish bath is a system where they get, they heat up stones in one corner, and every once in a while they pour water over the stones so it creates the steam. That's the steam that, that, that's used for, and you go into the steam rooms, there's like shelves. The higher you go up the hotter it is, you know. So you go up as high as you can, as much as you can stand, you know, and. And they used to take the, they had special, like a, it's like a broom, but it's made from leaves, that they wash themselves with. Then they use a bucket of water to pour, to cool yourself down again, you know. It's the same thing is saw here...

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GOLDMAN: ...as a matter of fact. I, I used to go to Coney Island here with my brother-in-law.

LEVINE: Well, how often would you go to a Turkish, to a...

GOLDMAN: Probably go once a year, once a week.

LEVINE: Once a week. And how long would you stay there?

GOLDMAN: Oh, I don't remember. I was only a child. And my, my grandfather used to take me home after that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And do you remember your other grandparents, your...

GOLDMAN: Yes. There was my, my father's mother used to come and visit us.

LEVINE: What do you remember about her?

GOLDMAN: Only that she was a nice woman, and she was very small. She seemed to be smaller than everybody else. And she was very much in, she liked me very much because she es, escorted us to the railroad station when we were leaving for America. And she gave me a whole ring of little bagels, tiny little bagels, for the trip.

LEVINE: Did she bake them?

GOLDMAN: I don't know what, no, I don't think so. I think she bought them. I don't know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GOLDMAN: But anyways [sic], that's the only, those bagels were the only thing that kept me going because I couldn't eat on the ship. I was very, very sick.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else, how, you say you were a religious family?

GOLDMAN: My, my grandfather was religious, yeah. He was, he used to go to, to synagogue every, every day practically. But I used to go with on the, on the sabbath.

LEVINE: And what about your mother and father?

GOLDMAN: Well, my father left when I was only two and a half years old.

LEVINE: So you didn't remember your father...

GOLDMAN: No, I...

LEVINE: ...until you came here?

GOLDMAN: ...I didn't remember until I came here, no.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, how did your mother manage once your father left for America? How did, how did, did she work?

GOLDMAN: Yes, she had to work. We had a hotel there and she used to, to do work in the hotel.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GOLDMAN: House cleaning, I don't know what she did. And I guess that's where he, and my grandfather did his work. And so we were supported.

LEVINE: I see. And were you close to your sister Mary?

GOLDMAN: Yeah, we got along pretty well until the very end. She only died about a year ago. She was ninety-one.

MRS. GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: So, so what else? Is there anything else? How about food? Do you remember any of the kinds of food that you liked when you were a little boy in Russia?

GOLDMAN: No. I, I liked everything I ate. I never discriminated food. (he laughs)

MRS. GOLDMAN: ...still does.

LEVINE: And did you, and, and do you remember, like, what would be a typical day in, in your household when you were still in Russia? You'd go, you'd go to the Yeshiva, and then you'd come, and what?

GOLDMAN: I guess we had our dinner and...

MRS. GOLDMAN: Go to sleep.

GOLDMAN: I don't remember what we...

LEVINE: Did anybody ever tell you stories? Do you remember

any?

GOLDMAN: No.

LEVINE: How about music? Was there any, anybody who played any instrument or singing or...

GOLDMAN: No. Nobody that I knew of.

LEVINE: What, what is your fondest memory? What are your fondest memories of when you were a little boy in Russia? Are there any things that when you think of them you, you remember them...

GOLDMAN: Well, I remem, I remember one time, I don't how old I was, but I, I went out and got lost. That was before my father left for America. He was going to work somewhere and I walked out to look for him. And I got lost and somebody else brought me home. And that's the only thing I, I can remember being carried on, on somebody's shoulders.

LEVINE: What was your father doing for work when he was in Russia?

GOLDMAN: He was a, a scribe. He used to write Torahs. He worked for a firm that had a couple of men working. (Mrs. Goldman coughs) Each one worked on a different Torah. See, he was one of those.

LEVINE: Was that considered a very good position to have?

GOLDMAN: Well, I don't know really. The funny thing is this. When he came to America he had occasions when they asked him to come and, and write, he didn't want to do it. I guess he didn't like the, the work.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else, you said your father left for America to avoid going in the Russian army?

GOLDMAN: No, he, see, he was already, he already served in the army. He did the five years that they're supposed to serve. And then the, the Japanese war broke out, the Russian Japanese war. And he was called back in, in reserve. And he didn't relish going back into the army. After serving five years he thought he, he did enough for his country and he wanted to get out. So somehow he got out. I understand that he had trouble

getting out, because he was caught on the, on the border once or twice and sent back. And the funny thing is this. I, I heard stories like he was home already, he was back, you know, and he was supposed to be still in the, in the reserve, you know. And he, he went with my mother to the office and collected his pay while, while he was trying to get out. (they laugh)

LEVINE: I see. So, how about anti-semitism. Were there, were there gentiles and well, as well as Jewish people in your town?

MRS. GOLDMAN: Are you kidding? (she laughs)

GOLDMAN: Oh, yes, there were. There was a big church right around the corner from us. But I, I don't remember being, I didn't remember being any, any, having any trouble with anti-semitism.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GOLDMAN: I, I never had any, I don't know. I don't remember having anybody that would be prejudiced to us, I don't

know. We seemed to be living pretty well, and...

LEVINE: You don't remember soldiers in your town, or anything...

GOLDMAN: Oh, yes. There were soldiers in our town, because we had a, we had a barracks. We must have had a, a regiment of soldiers staying in the town, because it was a fortress town as I told you. So there were soldiers there. But they, they never bothered us.

LEVINE: When your father was in the army, was he sent out of your town?

GOLDMAN: Yeah, sure. But he was in the army before I was born. And I heard stories about, my mother was very much in love with him. And she risked going to the town where he was staying, and she notified him that she's, she's there. And he got out of the, the barracks there, and he went A.W.O.L. to, to see her. That's how I heard about it, I don't know. But I don't remember any, any trouble with the, with the, except one time when there was a, in 1905 I think it was. I must have been about three. The Cossacks came to town. They heard that

there were revolutionaries. You know, that there was an uprising that time, and I think they tried to make a revolution back in 1905. And they came looking for, for, for radicals. So they, I, I remember I was playing outside, and suddenly somebody said something that the Cossacks were coming. So I didn't know what it was, but everybody seemed to be so excited. So I got scared and I ran to the door, and they slammed the door in my face and I was left outside. And finally somebody opened the door and let me in. But I, I was told later that the landlord that we lived with was a, you know, a, he was something in the army at, before he retired. So he had some influence. And he walked out and he talked to the Cossacks and they went away.

LEVINE: Did people talk about stories about Cossacks that you remember hearing as you grew older?

GOLDMAN: Well, evidently there must have, because I was scared and I heard there were, and I heard the story. When I heard they were coming, I, I got scared like all the others, everybody ran indoors.

LEVINE: What kind of a person was your mother? What was she like?

GOLDMAN: Well, I don't remember too much about, well, we got along pretty well because I was the apple of her eye, you know. The only, I was the only son, and the other, the other one was a daughter. So we got along pretty well. I never had any trouble with her.

LEVINE: So how was it decided then that, that you would come to America? When was that decided and why?

GOLDMAN: Well, my, my father left in 1905, and we came here in 1910. That's five years later.

LEVINE: Did he send you money?

GOLDMAN: Well, he had, she had two brothers here. One here in New York and the other one in Boston. And they pitched in and they sent for us.

LEVINE: So it was your mother, you and your sister?

GOLDMAN: Yeah. Yeah. Three of us.

LEVINE: And do you remember leaving the town where you lived, leaving Bobruysk...

GOLDMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: ...and, and travelling to where you got the ship?

GOLDMAN: Yes. It was, it, we had to cross borders. I know we, I know we, I think we had to change at the German border. Another different train. I had to get off one train and go to the other.

LEVINE: Had you ever been out of Bobruysk before you left...

GOLDMAN: No. Never.

LEVINE: So, do you remember, was it exciting?

GOLDMAN: Oh, wait a minute. I was out once. I was, I was sent to an uncle of mine in, in another town. I don't remember the name of the town. It was little, like a little, tiny village. They had, he lived in a house with earthen floors. There were no, he was

(unintelligible) like, like primitive out there. I, I stayed there I think only a couple of nights. It was like also a little town somewhere near a river. I don't remember the name of the town. And then I came home. That was the only time I went out of Bobruysk that time, I think.

LEVINE: Well, when you went by train to, to get the ship to America, you went over the German border, and then you got another train?

GOLDMAN: We must have because we got, we went to Amsterdam. Not Amster, yeah, Amsterdam. We, we took the ship in Amsterdam.

LEVINE: And were you examined before you got on the ship?

GOLDMAN: I don't remember.

LEVINE: Do you remember the name of the ship?

GOLDMAN: Yeah. The Noordam. I think it was sunk during the war. During the first war.

LEVINE: Do, do you remember anything your mother packed and took with you when you were coming to America?

GOLDMAN: No. I don't remember what she packed, but I remember the ship. We, we, we were, we came in steerage. So every morning they would chase us out on board. They had to clean up the place. They'd chase us out on board. And I was very sick. I, I couldn't take the, the voyage. My mother was the only, my mother was supposed to be the sickly one, and she's the one that felt the best of us. But I remember running around on the deck. And we had some stormy weather. I got sprayed in the face on the deck one time. From the, from the winds and rain. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic) Hmm.

LEVINE: Now, did, did you encounter any different kinds of food?

GOLDMAN: Well, of course. I saw bananas for the first time on board ship, and tomatoes. I...

LEVINE: What did you think when you, when you first saw a banana?

GOLDMAN: Bananas, well, I, to me they taste good enough. You know, as long as it tastes good I don't care. But tomatoes were a little bit hard to get for a while, but I got used to that, too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, let's see. So, is there anything else that happened aboard ship that you recall?

GOLDMAN: Oh, the only thing I recall is that I didn't feel good. (he laughs) I was a very sick boy.

LEVINE: Okay. I want to pause here for a minute. Will you just turn that off? (break in tape) Okay, so we'll continue now. And we were just talking about, when you were on ship do you remember the boat coming into the New York Harbor?

GOLDMAN: I remember seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time. Every, everybody knew about that. Everybody came on board to look for it.

LEVINE: What were people doing?

GOLDMAN: Oh, everybody was excited on board, you know. (Mrs.

Goldman off-mic) They, they came into the harbor and saw the Statue of Liberty and we knew we were in New York. And we came to Ellis Island. I don't think, I don't remember if we stayed very long, because my, my uncles came for us. And they, they took us to, they lived in Harlem, one uncle. And I, I was taken for the first time on the "El." You know, the railroad station.

LEVINE: What was that like?

GOLDMAN: It was, it was fun looking down and see the street beneath, you know. All the automobiles and everything. My, my uncle pointed out all the different things as we came to, then we finally came home there.

LEVINE: Well, what was your impression of Ellis Island?

GOLDMAN: I didn't have very much of an impression, because I didn't see much of it. We didn't stay very long. We were taken right off.

LEVINE: Were you examined there?

GOLDMAN: I don't remember. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic) I don't remember at all.

LEVINE: So when you got to your uncle's house, what, was that very different from where you had lived?

GOLDMAN: Oh, of course it was.

LEVINE: In what ways?

GOLDMAN: Well, first of all, this was a tenant, a tenement house. You got to go up stairs, and, and the streets are different. You know, I was in a little, I was in a town where the next house is quite a distance away, all of the streets are wide. We, we had, you know, they already had electric lights in, in our town. And they had a movie house and all that, so it wasn't too much backward. But it was, it didn't resemble anything like New York, of course. New York is altogether different.

LEVINE: Do you, did you have, did you have indoor plumbing when you were in Russia?

MRS. GOLDMAN: Forget it.

GOLDMAN: No.

LEVINE: So that, was that new?

GOLDMAN: Wait a minute. I don't even remember...

MRS. GOLDMAN: Outhouse.

GOLDMAN: No, I don't remember. I don't remember whether we had an outhouse or not.

MRS. GOLDMAN: He was eight years old when he was there.

GOLDMAN: No, I don't remember what.

LEVINE: Well, can you remember anything about the tenement where you were living that struck you at the time?

GOLDMAN: Nothing in particular. I used to go right downstairs and play in the street. I don't know. We were somewheres [sic] near that, I think the, must be near the, the railroads, I used to go past that. I don't

think it was an elevated. I think it was a regular railroad.

LEVINE: Do you remember the address where you were?

GOLDMAN: No.

LEVINE: The street?

GOLDMAN: No. Somewheres [sic] in 101st, 102nd. I don't remember.

LEVINE: So, did you start school right away?

GOLDMAN: I started school later, when we finally got an apartment later in, in Brownsville here. Our first apartment was on Blake Avenue. Between Rockaway and, and Osborne. So we stayed there. It was a, I think a two or three family house. And from there I, I was taken to school.

LEVINE: Do you remember your meeting your father for the first time that you re, that when you got here?

GOLDMAN: I don't remember meeting him the first time, but I remember when we lived together though.

LEVINE: What was it like being, having your father around?

GOLDMAN: Well...(Mrs. Goldman off-mic)...I, I don't know what to say. He used to take me here and there, everywhere, you know. We used to go together.

LEVINE: Where would you go for example with him?

GOLDMAN: Oh, he'd take, he'd take me to the park or somewhere else. The playground.

LEVINE: What was he doing for work here?

GOLDMAN: Here he was, when I first came to the United States here, he worked in a big jewelry store in, in the maintenance department. After that he finally got to work on, on, on buildings. He was a, a hod carrier. He did that kind of work. Mix cement, do things like that.

LEVINE: Did he like it in the United States? Do you remember

anything he told you about being in America or anything like that?

GOLDMAN: No. He never told me anything about how he felt.

LEVINE: How about your mother? Was she happy she had come?

GOLDMAN: She was. At times she was, at times she wasn't. And look, there was, we went through quite of bit of different conditions.

**END OF SIDE ONE**

**BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO**

LEVINE: Do you remember hard times when you were here?

GOLDMAN: No. To me it, it wasn't hard.

LEVINE: What was school like compared with the school you'd, the Yeshiva that, where you'd been in in...

GOLDMAN: Well, (unintelligible) think I had, I went to school here. I liked it pretty well.

MRS. GOLDMAN: How long did you go?

GOLDMAN: What do you mean, how long did I go? I went to school till I was, I think was about thirteen, fourteen and applied for working papers so I can go to work, to help augment the income in the house. So I went to work.

LEVINE: Were you a good student?

GOLDMAN: Average. Not that too. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic)

MRS. GOLDMAN: Remember that?

GOLDMAN: Hmm?

LEVINE: What about learning English? Did you, you didn't know any English when you first came.

GOLDMAN: No.

LEVINE: How was that for you?

GOLDMAN: I think it was routine. You learned it and that's all. It was, I don't know, to me it didn't seem to be any trouble.

MRS. GOLDMAN: Learn in the street, I guess.

GOLDMAN: Yeah, learn in the streets.

LEVINE: So when you got your working papers what did you do? What kind of work?

GOLDMAN: I got a job in a place where they made, back years ago they made hat frames. They made the frames and then they sent it to the manufacturer and they finished the hats. So this was a place where they made frames. So they worked with...

LEVINE: Were the frames part of the hat or they were just what they used to make the hat on? What...

GOLDMAN: No, that, it ended up being part of the hat.

LEVINE: I see.

GOLDMAN: See, they just decorated the frame.

LEVINE: What were they made out of?

GOLDMAN: Well, they had two kinds. They had buckram that was wetted down and then press into shape on the, on the machines that had a cover and covered and steamed it. And it brought out the shape, whatever they wanted, you know. And they had wire frames that were made by hand. People work with the wires and twisted them into shape and tied them together.

LEVINE: Hmm. So you, did you work there a long time?

MRS. GOLDMAN: No.

GOLDMAN: I don't remember. I worked, I, I think a few, quite a while.

LEVINE: And then what?

GOLDMAN: Well, and then, and then I, I wanted to become, I was

more interested in, in machinery. So I got a job in a, in a automobile repair shop. And I was working in the automobile repair shop for quite a few years. And then my sister got married to a man who was a necktie maker. So he said to me, "Why do you go in to a dirty job like that, come home all dirty? Why don't you come work for us, and, and work on a clean job?" So I finally became a necktie maker. And from there I remained in, till I, until I retired I was making neckties all along.

MRS. GOLDMAN:...meet his wife.

LEVINE: Yeah. How did you meet your wife?

GOLDMAN: Oh, she happened to be working in a place where I came to work to help out. It was in the season where they needed more work and I, I had been laid off on a job I had. I worked in the union shop, you know. And I was laid off there. So I was sent to this place, and, and the other, the place I worked in made the regular long tie. But the place that my wife worked in made bow ties, you know, the, the tie that you tie yourself. Not, not the ready made bows. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic)

So I got to working and that's where I met my wife, because she was working there, too. And I remained in the neckwear industry. Later on we, I tried to do contracting on our own, and...

MRS. GOLDMAN: He worked all the time...

GOLDMAN: ...with my brother-in-law. And there I had to learn other things. So I learned cutting and pressing, all the different parts. I, I was able to do anything in the shop that was needed.

MRS. GOLDMAN: Repair machines.

GOLDMAN: And I re, after I left him, I got a job in a un, in a union shop, and I remained a cutter till I, till I retired.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you have children?

GOLDMAN: Yeah, I got two daughters.

LEVINE: And what are their names?

GOLDMAN: Well, they were, they were both in the, in the education system. They're both teachers.

LEVINE: And what are their names?

MRS. GOLDMAN:What are their names?

GOLDMAN: One is Nancy and the other one is...

MRS. GOLDMAN:Wilma.

GOLDMAN: Wilma. Wilma is now in, in Turkey teaching English there with her husband. She took it for just one season, so she'll be through in July. She'll probably be home in September or August. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic)

LEVINE: Now, tell me about the fact of being born in Russia and coming here as an eight year old boy and living the rest of your life in this country. Do you think having come from some place else as an immigrant made a big difference, had any kind of effect on you?

GOLDMAN: No, I don't think so. To me, as a little boy, you

know, you fit in wherever you are very easily.  
There's, there's no problems, you know. The only  
problems I had was go to school, learn. When I was  
old enough to go to work I went to work. That's all.

LEVINE: What do you feel proud of that you did in your  
lifetime?

GOLDMAN: Well, I feel mostly proud of my children and my  
grandchildren. Because they are the real things that  
I'm interested in. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic)

LEVINE: What, what is it about them that, that makes you feel  
good?

GOLDMAN: Well, I got a granddaughter that's now living in, it's  
called Bloomfield, Colorado. And she's, she was a  
teacher here in New York, because her mother is a  
teacher, her father is a principle, you know. (Mrs.  
Goldman off-mic) So she was a pretty good teacher  
here in New York. And she went, she had to go to, she  
was married to a man who worked for the Bell, the Bell  
system. He's a computer scientist. So they, they  
induced him to go there. You know, these people that

call you up, and, he was working for the Bell system in Jersey. He was asked to go to work there. So they, they paid for all his expenses, and he went out there. And, and now my granddaughter has gone into the, into the educational system, too. She got a job there as a teacher and...

MRS. GOLDMAN:She's got a younger one.

GOLDMAN: ...that's the one that's in Turkey. She's a lot older now...

MRS. GOLDMAN:You want to know something? She's five seven. And, and when they come in, I got grandson, six four, the hus, her husband is six two. I got a grandson, my older daughter, he's six four. So just imagine. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Okay. So, so you feel proud that, that...(Mrs. Goldman off-mic)

GOLDMAN: Yeah, and that...(a doorbell rings)...

MRS. GOLDMAN:Just a minute. I'll get it.

GOLDMAN: Oh, yeah. It's open, Dina. You didn't lock...

MRS. GOLDMAN: It's open, it's open. It's open.

GOLDMAN: So, I'm proud of her, because she, she's been really getting good marks there. She got into teaching there, and they like her style very much. And she gets all kinds of praises.

LEVINE: Good.

GOLDMAN: So, I'm proud of that. And she got two little girls that are really out of this world.

LEVINE: These are your great grandchildren?

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Huh.

GOLDMAN: And they're so bright, you know, you, the same thing happened with my older daughter's grandchild, too. Another great grandson I got from the older one. He comes here, he just a delight. He knows exactly

everything, he knows everything. (Mrs. Goldman off-mic) He's, he's going to be seven, and he's just out of, into first, I think he's grow, going to the second grade soon.

MRS. GOLDMAN: Second grade.

LEVINE: Hmm-hmm.

GOLDMAN: And he knows everything. He's very bright. So that's the things I got to be proud of.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you, do you, can you think of any things that happened during your lifetime that made a big difference to you, whether they were political things, or just any personal or political, or any kind of changes that you lived through or...

GOLDMAN: Well, we lived through all kinds of changes here, you know. We went through the, the De, the Depression, you know. We had pretty hard times during that time. I had lost my job that time, and we had to do something ourselves. We used to do some work at home. I used to do some, I even tried to contract some work

out from manufacturers here. We found the store and we sold a couple of machines and we did all kinds of work, and, there was a, some hard times during that time. But we overcame it. So right now I think we did all right so far.

LEVINE: Is there anything else that you can think of that you'd like to say, about your life or your attitudes or anything else before we close?

GOLDMAN: Well, what is there to say. I listen to the radio, and I hear some of these guys like, what's his name? Bob Grant. And the other guys. And I don't understand why these people are so vicious about the idea that we got a Democratic president. You know they don't call him by his name, they call him "Slick Willy?"

MRS. GOLDMAN: Slick Willy, yeah.

GOLDMAN: Ever hear a thing like that? I never heard it in my life. I, we had Wilson, we had all kinds of presidents. I never heard anybody call them names like that or degrade them for some reason. Anything,

anything he does is wrong to them.

LEVINE: Do you, you, I take it you like Clinton as a president?

GOLDMAN: I, I guess so. He's doing the best he can. I think he's doing a lot more than all the others, have the nice, big words and do nothing. When you finally get a president that's trying to do something, (unintelligible) degrade him. "He's a radical, he's a socialist, he's a, he's a communist." You know, to them he's a communist. They don't even know the name, the word communism. If they'd know it, they'd know the difference. Because to them these, he's supposed to be an ultra conservative, what's his name? That big fat guy.

MRS. GOLDMAN: I don't remember name.

GOLDMAN: He, he's always finding, "the truth," he's finding, "the truth." Everything is wrong what everybody, what, what a Republican or a liberal does is, is wrong. You got to, you can't, you're not supposed to help the poor....

MRS. GOLDMAN: Grant. Isn't his name Grant. Isn't his name Grant?

GOLDMAN: No. Bob Grant's another guy. But anything, anything you do, they seem to think government is there only for the rich people. If you, if you do something for the poor you're a socialist.

MRS. GOLDMAN: ...that's exactly what it is.

GOLDMAN: And that, that really burns me up. I never heard any, such disrespect for an elected official.

LEVINE: Did you become a citizen on your father's papers...

GOLDMAN: No.

LEVINE: ...or did you become one on your own?

GOLDMAN: No, I had to go on my own.

LEVINE: Do you remember what that was like?

GOLDMAN: Well, yes. We went to, we went to, I had to go to court. And I was there, examined by a judge. He asked me a lot of questions and all that. And at the time I belonged to the I.W.W. No, it was, not the I.W.W.

LEVINE: The Garment...

MRS. GOLDMAN: Workman's...

LEVINE: ...Garment Worker's Union?

MRS. GOLDMAN: Workman's Circle.

GOLDMAN: No, it wasn't...

MRS. GOLDMAN: Workman's Circle.

GOLDMAN: Workman's Circle. Workman's Circle was, was in, a fraternity organization. They wanted to know whether they were communist, and what did they say at meetings while they talk. I said, "What do you expect them to talk? It's a fraternal organization, we talk about fraternal things." But anyways [sic] they finally

gave me papers.

MRS. GOLDMAN: What do you mean finally? They gave them to you without com, complaining.

LEVINE: Well, did, did you feel, was that a happy day for you when you became a citizen, or it wasn't a big, momentous event?

GOLDMAN: Well, I had a purpose to become a citizen, I wanted to vote. So I, I, of course, I was satisfied to get it.

LEVINE: So have you always been politically interested in, in what's going on?

GOLDMAN: Well, I always, I always sided with the Democrats. Because I can't see, so far every Republican has brought, brought nothing but misery to this country. Hoover came in and he, he couldn't, he was asked about something, and he says he didn't read in the papers yet, he don't know what happened. And nothing happened. Roosevelt got in and he, he did something to turn the country around when it was going down the drain. Truman did everything he could to turn the

country around. And these so-called conservatives see that all, as all wrong. If you do something for the people it's wrong. You got, you, you got, everybody got to climb out of the, out of the dumps on their own shoestrings. They got, they, they're not supposed to be helped by the government. What is the government for? It's supposed to govern the people, so it just, it's supposed to do whatever is necessary for people that need it. Al, although there are a couple of things that they did now that's completely wrong. This welfare refare [sic], reform. If they ever bring that around to something then maybe it might help. But now they, they had, see, this stupid idea. They put a person on welfare. And that person found himself a little job and made a few dollars to cover the difference because they get so little. So they took it off their money. They took it off their wages. Isn't that stupid? If people, if people can help themselves a little bit more to get out of the rut they're in, then they, they shouldn't bother them. So that was those, that was wrong with the welfare system. Because these people see that they take their money away from them, then why can they go to work? They stay home and, and get paid. And, and now the

young people have got the same idea. I heard the (unintelligible), they'll have a baby, they'll go on welfare. And that's what they do. Because they're, now they are here in Jersey, they started the, the program of stopping welfare on people that have other, more children. But they could have helped them. For instance, mothers are, even if they want to go to work they couldn't because they had the children to take of. Why couldn't the government have a place for a child to be taken so the mother can go to work?

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I think maybe we'll close here.

GOLDMAN: Okay.

LEVINE: And I want to thank you very much. You seem to remember a lot for an eight year old...

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...coming to this country, remembering your town and, and all that.

GOLDMAN: Hmm.

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LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, well, now, I've been talking with Israel Goldman, and it's the 17th of May...

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...1994. Mr. Goldman will be ninety-two...

GOLDMAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...in July of this year. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm signing off.