

**EI-711**

**HELEN BURBA**

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

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- **POLAND: PRZYLAJ**
- **THE US: MANCHESTER AND DERRY, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

LEVINE: Today is November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1995, and I'm here in Derry, New Hampshire. I'm with Mrs. Helen Burba, whose maiden name was Plocharczyk [PH], and she came from Poland. She was only eighteen months old when she came to the United States through Ellis Island. However, she can relate some of the stories that her parents told her, and then she can talk about having immigrated from Poland, and settling first in Nashua, and now later in Derry.

BURBA: Manchester.

LEVINE: Oh, Manchester first, and then Derry?

BURBA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, well I'm delighted to be here, and I'm looking forward to what you have to say, whatever you can remember. Okay, if we would start at the beginning, tell me where you were born in Poland.

BURBA: I was born in Przylaj. It's a little country town in the northern part of Poland, probably a few miles from Warsaw. Because I remember my grandfather telling, later, you know, about going into Warsaw. Of course, no cars—it was horse and buggies. So it wasn't too far from Warsaw.

LEVINE: And could you spell for the tape town?

BURBA: P-R-Z-Y-L-A-J. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, and what was your birth date?

BURBA: February 25<sup>th</sup>, Nineteen hundred and eight.

LEVINE: And you would have no memory of Poland?

BURBA: No, no.

LEVINE: But what do you remember that your mother or father or anyone told you about it?

BURBA: I know that I was very spoiled by my grandfather. He thought the world of me. And she, I can remember her telling me about how spoiled I was. I wanted a bath in the middle of the night, or play in a tub of water, and my grandfather would get up in the night and heat the water, and put the tub out in the kitchen, and let me sit there and splash all it wanted! My mother told me that.

LEVINE: [Laughs] What was your grandfather's name?

BURBA: What was his name, Flossie?

FLOSSIE: Was is Stanley?

BURBA: Stanley, yeah.

LEVINE: Stanley. Now was this your father's father?

BURBA: My father's father, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And your maiden name? Your father's last name?

BURBA: Plocharczyk.

LEVINE: Yeah, P-L-O-C-H-A-R-C-Z-Y-K.

BURBA: Yeah. My dad's name was Joseph.

LEVINE: And your mother's name?

BURBA: Elenora.

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

BURBA: Grzegorzcyk.

LEVINE: Oh, boy! Can you spell that one?

BURBA: Yes, G-R-Z-E-G-O-R-C-Z-Y-K, Grzegorzcyk.

LEVINE: And did you have a lot of relatives in Poland, on your mother's side and your father's side?

BURBA: No. My mother was an orphan at the age of nine, and my aunt brought her up. And she had a sister, and that's all I know about them. Her sister came to this country, too, but she settled out in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And of course, my mother got married, and she came here, to Manchester. But she had no mother. I mean actually, she doesn't remember her mother or father. All she knew, that her father died before, shortly before she was born, and that he was a cabinetmaker. He made beautiful cabinets. And that's all she remembers of her father, which was told to her by her aunt that brought her up. And her sister, like I said, they got separated. She married somebody, and my mother married somebody, and, but later on in the years after they came to this country, my sister Flossie, there, took my mother to Philadelphia to see her sister after all these years.

FLOSSIE: It was her niece, Helen.

BURBA: Huh?

FLOSSIE: It was her sister's daughter, niece. Valergia [PH] was her niece.

BURBA: But didn't you go see--?

FLOSSIE: But that was Mama's niece, not her sister.

BURBA: Oh, it was? I thought it was her sister!

FLOSSIE: Oh, no, no, it was her niece, Valergia. [PH]

BURBA: Oh! Well didn't she go out there, too?

FLOSSIE: Her sister died in Poland, and left Mama. That's why Mama was an orphan; she went on her own at nine years old!

LEVINE: Her mother had died, too?

FLOSSIE: Her sister died, and she was quite young. And my mother was on her own after she was nine years old. She worked for the wealthy Polish people.

BURBA: Imagine that?

LEVINE: Yeah, so what did your mother ever tell you about her life in Poland?

BURBA: Nothing much, that you know, it was bad. She remembers practically living with the Gypsies. There used to be a band of Gypsies that used to come on the land there. And I remember her telling about being with the Gypsies. And that's about it, until she met my father.

LEVINE: Did you ever hear the story of how your mother and father met?

BURBA: No, I don't know. I don't know how they met. But she went to work there for him. How else, I don't know.

LEVINE: What was your father doing for work in Poland?

BURBA: He was working on the farm.

LEVINE: On the farm?

BURBA: Yeah, they all worked on the farm. They had a big farm, and they all worked on the farm. Don't wiggle the papers. And anyway, I know the sisters, my father's sisters would always go out at morning, go out and work in the fields. And so they only had one brother, my father did. He's still in Poland. That it, I mean, he's dead now, but he's the only one left to take care of the farm. All the sisters and my father all came to this country, yeah, and he was left there. And I did correspond with him when I was a kid, because I went to a Polish school, and I learned to read and write in Polish, you know, language. So I used to do my mother's writing for her, you know, and we used to write to my uncle in Poland. And I know that one time they called us, I mean wrote to us, and asked for, if we could send them some material. One of the daughters was getting married and they wanted it for a wedding gown, you know. We didn't have any more money out here than we did out there! My Dad was peddling coal in the winter time, and wood in the summer time, you

know, going around houses and peddling it. And Mama just stayed home. We had borders; we took in borders to kind of make it a little bit easier for us.

LEVINE: Well before we talk about life in this country, is there anything that you recall that your mother or father said about the family's life in Poland before they came here?

BURBA: Like I said, that's all I know is that they were farmers. I know my mother saying they went to church every Sunday.

LEVINE: What church was it?

BURBA: I don't know the name of the church.

LEVINE: Was it a Catholic church?

BURBA: Catholic church. And they would—they'd only have one pair of shoes, and they would go to church barefooted. And when they got near the church, they'd put their shoes on, and then when they came out of church, they'd take their shoes off and walk home barefooted. You know, that's the kind of a life they had.

LEVINE: And you mentioned something about—your mother was afraid that you would cry?

BURBA: Oh, yeah. When—you see, what happened was my Dad was in the Russian Army. We were under the Russian rule. Poland got her independence during World War Two. And the Russian-Japanese War broke out, and my Dad knew he would have to go and fight for Russia. And he said then, "I'll fight for Poland, but I will not fight for Russia." So he had a sister here in Manchester already, and she sent him money to come out here. And he left me and my mother in Poland, and he came out here to Manchester. And he got himself a job, and he told—that's when he sent money for my mother and I. But in the mean time, my mother was pregnant with her second baby, see. And sent money, and like I said, we had to be smuggled out of Poland, because on account of what my father did. He skipped the army. And the only way we could get—there was a hay wagon. The man from the town where we lived took us in the hay wagon, loaded with hay, and we got in under the hay. He got us over the German border into Germany to get our ship to come to the United States. And my mother was very, very sick. We went steerage. You know what that is? And Mama was very, very sick. She was pregnant, too, and the voyage was rough. But she said the sailors took a liking to me. I was little.

LEVINE: Before you tell about the ship—so you were all in a wagon, a hay wagon, to go over--?

BURBA: Just the two of us, yeah, my mother and I, in the hay wagon. And like I said, we got on the ship all right and everything. And she was very sick and couldn't take care of me. And the sailors, she said, were so good to me. And there was a Jewish lady who was riding first class, you know. She took me, and she took care of me 'til we got into the United States. So my Dad used to always say, "Well, your mother went steerage, but you went first class!"

LEVINE: Well did you know this woman who took care of you?

BURBA: No, she was a perfect stranger, yeah. We didn't know her. Isn't that something!

LEVINE: Did your mother every say—was it because your mother was ill that she took you?

BURBA: Yeah, yeah, that's right, because she was ill and couldn't take care of me. I was only eighteen months old.

LEVINE: Did you ever hear from that woman after that?

BURBA: No. See, isn't that something? No.

LEVINE: Well, wasn't that a kind act?

BURBA: Yeah. They were very good to me; she took care of me, and she said the sailors on the ship there were very good to me, too. You know, I probably was a little brat! I don't know [laughs].

LEVINE: You were probably cute [laughs]. Everybody liked you! So do you remember your mother saying anything about when the ship came to New York, and specifically--?

BURBA: Well, isn't that funny? Yes, she remembers, you know, our getting in New York. But of course, New York didn't mean nothing to her, God love her. She couldn't—never read. She didn't know anything. She didn't read; she didn't write, Polish or English, you know what I mean? And we went through the customs, and I guess we passed all right, health-wise, you know, and everything, because they let us go. But that's about all. But like you say, the Statue of Liberty didn't mean nothing to her.

LEVINE: So then the family came to Manchester, directly after this?

BURBA: Yes, we came right directly from New York to Manchester, because that's where my Dad was.

LEVINE: What are your earliest memories of growing up in Manchester?

BURBA: Well, [laughs] I know that I went to a Polish school.

LEVINE: When you say a Polish school, that means everything was taught in Polish?

BURBA: Polish. No English whatsoever, just all Polish. And it was a Catholic school, and the nuns were very, very strict. I remember that. And I can remember coming home and telling my mother. I went to school one day, because I was afraid to stay out. I was sick; I had laryngitis. I couldn't speak a word, but I would go to school just the same, because I was afraid of staying out, because they were so mean to me, you know? Other kids, all. And I went to school, and the teacher called on me, and to this day I remember what was written on the blackboard. I was in the first grade. Ceboulia. [PH]That means onion. And I couldn't tell her what it was, because I couldn't speak out; I had laryngitis! So she got the priest to come in, and I can remember he pulled me right out of my seat by my ear! Because he thought that I was just—and I couldn't—I tried, but I couldn't tell him. I had laryngitis. I know when I come home I told my mother about it, and my Mama got a little bit hurt. So she took me out of that school, because they built another Polish school, but it wasn't recognized by the Pope. It was a National Catholic school, and she put me in there, so my second year was there. And they taught—in the morning, they taught Polish. In the afternoon, they taught English. So I was getting some English, see? And they weren't—they weren't—there was no nuns there. I know we had teachers, women teachers and men teachers, but no nuns. And there, I went through second grade [unclear] we moved to Derry. And I can remember moving to Derry, and I couldn't speak a word of English, only what little bit I learned there, you know. And I can remember sitting on the doorsteps with the kids, and the people would be coming out of work. There was a factory, two factories, right near where we lived. Coming by, and a woman would go by, and they'd say, "Woman." The man would go by, and they'd say, "Man." They're teaching me how to talk English! [Laughs]

LEVINE: Who was teaching you?

BURBA: The kids! The kids, yeah! And I went into the third grade when I came to Derry, of course, and I couldn't—like I said, what little English I knew, it wasn't enough. But somehow I survived it; I don't know how. But I will tell you something that happened in the third grade. We had—the teacher gave us something to do, and it was all about taxation, and you know, this country. And when she said tax, I thought it meant little nails. You know, tacks? So in my mind, that's what it was. But yet, I knew it was T-A-X. So when I wrote the paper out, you know, and everything, I wrote it right; I spelled it right. But in my mind it was still little nails, but I couldn't figure that out! Well anyway, I

got married, and I had children, and my first daughter was in her grade, can you imagine that? Miss Webster's grade, my first grade—that teacher. And I went visiting school, and I told her that I went to school here, and you were my teacher. And she said—and I told her who I was. And she said, "Oh, goodness Helen! I would never, never know it." So of course, my name was Butterfield, I married a Butterfield. And do you know the next day, my kid came home from school, and the teacher says, "Here, you give this paper to your mother." She says, "I've held onto it long enough." She had that paper all these years! It was my paper with the [unclear] on it. Can you imagine that? [Laughs] I'll never forget that.

LEVINE: Now why did she save it? Why do you think she—?

BURBA: Because it was so good! Imagine that! And I went through flying colors after that. I had no problems whatsoever. Yeah, I always had all A's on my report card. I was very conscientious about it, because the kids made fun of me.

LEVINE: What would they do? How would they--?

BURBA: Because they called me Polander. [PH]You know how kids are. I'd be going to school, and they'd be hollering behind me, "Polander, Polander," you know, until—I have a friend of mine, Mamie Morin. She went to school with me. She lived the next street over. And we became friends for a long, long time, don't think we didn't. And she would say to me, "Helen, the next time they call you Polander, just tell them I'm not a Frog!" You know, this things just stick in my head!

LEVINE: Did you ever encounter the term greenhorn? Because that's what people often called people who had immigrated.

BURBA: No, I never was called a greenhorn, no, never. Just that. But other than that, after we got settled in Derry here, it was wonderful. All these kids that called me names, they became my best friends! You know what I mean?

LEVINE: Well now, in Manchester there must have been a large Polish immigrant population when you were young?

BURBA: There was quite a few people here, but it was mostly French. It was mostly French, yeah. There was a few families, Russian families, Lithuanian families, and Polish families. But I mean, you take our Russians, Poles, and Liths, we're all about that same—

LEVINE: In Derry was there also a mix of people from other countries?

BURBA: Yeah.

LEVINE: In Manchester and Derry, both?

BURBA: Yeah, in Derry, Manchester, both. Oh, Manchester had a lot of Polish people. Manchester did have a lot of Polish people. But Derry was not quite so much, but there were. There was a few Polish families.

LEVINE: How did your mother like being in the United States?

BURBA: She liked it, yeah. But like I said, she had so many kids! It was one year after another you'd have kids, and I was the oldest one. I was, you know, more or less, watching out for them, that. And it was rough.

LEVINE: So how many brothers and sisters did you have, in the end?

BURBA: I have ten; there was ten of us. Yeah, the ten of us. The first three—the first two Mama had in the old country died, and then I was the third one, and I lived. And then from then on, you know. They died in infancy. My mother had what they called small pox when she was pregnant with her second baby, and the baby was born with small pox, and only lived seven days, she said, and died. Her name was Victoria. And her first child was a little girl, and her name was—I would say it was Joanne today, because in Polish it's Jenina, [PH] and that's from John, taken from the name of John. So it would be, like probably, Joanne, you know. And my oldest daughter's name is Joanne, yeah.

LEVINE: So, how long did you stay in school then, in Derry?

BURBA: I graduated from the eighth grade.

LEVINE: And then what did you do?

BURBA: Went to work.

LEVINE: Where?

BURBA: I went to work in a shoe factory right here in Derry. My Dad was working in the shoe factory. And before school let out, he asked his boss if he couldn't find me a job, you know. And I can remember going to the factory and meeting Mr. Emery, which was his name. And he gave me a job, paid by the week, fifteen dollars a week. And it was an easy job, pulling tacks off the back of the shoe. And he was so good to me! He would have me running his errands for him. Well one morning I heard him holler, "Helen!" And I went running down to his office. And he couldn't untie his shoe lacings! So, "Will you untie them shoe lacings, Helen?" he says, "I can't untie them." So I had to untie his shoe lacings, so he could get on his shoes [laughs]. You know, I remember those things! And he was good to me. Like when he saw

me—I was very, very tiny for my age. I had to get a working certificate, because I wasn't sixteen, see. To go to work, you had to in those days. And I've been working ever since, in the shoe shop. But I didn't hang around Derry too much. I liked to be away from home. And I was the oldest one; I had a lot of responsibilities. So I had a cousin here in Derry named Polly, and she was four years older than I. So when I was sixteen, she was twenty. So, every time we'd see an ad in the paper: Shoe help wanted, Everett, Mass. So we went to Everett, Mass., got jobs. Anything to get away from home! Then that folded up. Oh, in those days the shops would fold up.

LEVINE: Did you actually both get a job in Everett?

BURBA: Yes, both of us! We had a little apartment all our own.

LEVINE: How long did you stay there?

BURBA: Oh, about a year, in Everett. And it was funny, because we had a supermarket there, a grocery market right there, and here we were down here. And the fellows that used to work in the market there, they used to have our supper already all cooked for us when we got home from work! [Laughs] We used to bring it over to our apartment and have our supper there! Can you imagine that, how good they were? One of the guys, the father owned the store, Frankie. And the other guy had a crush on Polly. And one Christmas time—we wouldn't even go home for Christmas! One Christmas time—we did our laundry, of course, by hand. And we had a little clothesline out on the side of the house. And we did our underwear, you know, and then we'd have it all hung out there. Next morning we woke up; it was Christmas morning. Those guys from the store came—we wore bloomers in those days—and they tied our bloomers, and filled them full of fruit, candy, nuts, and everything! [Laughs] I'm telling you, when I stop and think of the things we did!

LEVINE: Now, how old were you when you went to Everett?

BURBA: Oh, I would say I was about sixteen, seventeen.

LEVINE: Wasn't that rather daring for you and your cousin to do, for two young girls?

BURBA: Well, yeah, in those days there was nothing going on like there is today, you know? No, it was wonderful! Everybody was so good to us. We would have the apartment in a private family. It was just the woman and her son, and we'd have to share the bathroom with her and son. It was wonderful! I mean, she was so good to us. And then we got a job out in, oh, that big place. That big factory—oh, it's one of the biggest factories. Because they had—their help that worked on the floor used roller skates, because it was,

you know, it's so long, the factory was! What was the name of it? I can't remember now. But we got jobs there.

LEVINE: Was that also in Massachusetts?

BURBA: Yeah, it was—oh, I wish I could remember! It was in Massachusetts. And I wasn't stitching then, but my cousin Polly, she was stitching. So they have me a job ironing on backs, on the backs, you know, the quarters of the back of the shoe. You iron on back. And you have to count your shoes, and if there was any shortage there, and you handled that case, thirty-six pair of them, you had to pay for everything. Well, you know what I did? I was ironing them, and I left the iron on one of the vamps, and it scorched it! And I said, "Oh, I'll have to pay for it!" So you know what I did? Put it down my neck like this. Then I tied up the case, and I brought it over to the boss, and I said, "There's a vamp missing." So the girl that handled it before me had to pay for it. Now wasn't that awful!

LEVINE: Oh, no!

BURBA: Wasn't that awful for me to do? But, and I thought nothing of it! I didn't think that was wrong at all. Isn't that terrible, when I stop to think of it? But like I said, and then rather than come home. That place, it didn't fold up, but we got sick of it, so, and we didn't want to come home. So we got a job at the State—Medfield State Hospital, for the insane.

LEVINE: You and Polly?

BURBA: Yeah, we got a job there. We went and applied; they had an ad in the paper. We answered it; we got the job.

LEVINE: And what did you have to do there?

BURBA: Take care of the patients there, you know. There were anywheres from—I had a little girl in there, eighteen years old, to anybody about ninety. I had ninety-nine patients in that. Of course, I never was a nurse, and I can remember, we had to buy our uniforms at, not Filene's, but—

LEVINE: Jordan Marsh?

BURBA: What?

LEVINE: Jordan Marsh?

BURBA: Jordan Marsh, yeah. And in those days they wore short skirts. And we got uniforms that went down to our ankles! [Laughs] And we went to work that first morning with our uniforms way down our ankles, and all the other nurses

were all looking at us, and everybody else [laughs]. I felt so stupid! But anyways, they had a dressmaker there that shortened them for us.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE ONE

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE ONE

LEVINE: Well what was it like for you to be around so many mentally--?

BURBA: You know, that was such a change from anything that I ever did! And they were so good to us, the whole, the other nurses, and the doctors, and everybody. They were so good to us! We stayed right there in the building.

LEVINE: In the residence hall at Medfield?

BURBA: Yeah, yeah, and went to work in the morning. They went out to breakfast into another building, and I'd have to count every one of them. And when they came back, I had to count every one of them that came back, to be sure that there was—one of them didn't get lost, you know. You had to bathe them. And I know the first day I was there the head nurse there gave me a bunch of shoe lacings, and a comb. And now she said, "You go around that hall where they are, ninety-nine of them, and you see that they have shoe lacings," because I guess they would take shoe lacings out, or something, "And see that their hair is combed, because the doctor comes what they call tripping in." And I thought she was kidding me! I thought that they would be behind bars, you know, when I went there, and I wouldn't have to be anywhere near them, you know? I thought she was kidding me! But sure enough, I did it. I went and I inspected—I was scared stiff! And I come around, okay, I did fine. I had a little eighteen year old girl there, and all I could think was in the funny papers there was a little girl, and she looked just like her: black hair, black bangs, straight—Ella Cinders. She was in the funny papers. And that's all I could think of was Ella Cinders. And I nicknamed her, you know, Ella Cinders. I felt sorry for her, because there's all these old ladies in there; she's only a young girl. So when her folks came to visit her, I asked them why she's in there, and they said that she [pause], she would strip her clothes and run outside with no clothes on. She said, "We did everything, you know, to try to do something for her." And she said, "This is it. This is where she ended up."

FLOSSIE: Bye.

BURBA: Bye Flossie. [Tape off/on]

LEVINE: Okay, we're resuming now after Mrs. Burba's sister, Flossie DeRosia, has just left.

BURBA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, so you were talking about when you worked in the mental home, and you were particularly interested in this young eighteen year old girl. Now she—how old were you when you were working there? You couldn't have been too much older.

BURBA: I was seventeen!

LEVINE: You were actually younger than this young woman?

BURBA: Yeah. Imagine that! And I also had one woman that—we had long, long corridors, and she would sit at the end of the corridor, and she would howl like a dog, all day long! All day long! Well you know, I felt so sorry for that little girl. First thing I know, she's sitting at the end of the corridor, on the other side of her, howling like a dog, too. I did everything to try to keep her away from that woman. It was hard; I couldn't do it. Her folks were, you know, very disappointed; they did everything they could. I guess she was just a good mental patient. I don't know what. And another time, another incident there I got to tell you about it. I had, we had aprons with pockets in them, you know, over our uniforms. And I had a bag of candy in my pocket, and every now and then I would take a candy, and then I'd eat it. Well, this day [laughs] I just happened to be in the middle of that big hallway there, and I went to get the candy out, and the bag slipped out, and the candy went on the floor. Well, within ten seconds there was ninety-nine people in the middle of that floor, grabbing for that candy when the doctor came in! I was so embarrassed! I thought I'd get heck, you know, from him, but he got a big charge out of it. He said he'd never seen anything like it, me down there with ninety-nine of them after that candy! So that was a funny thing. But my mother got upset about me being out there, because my cousin Adam told her that he had known that some of the nurses get killed by the patients. So I got a telegram: Mama is very sick--come home. I went home. Mama wasn't sick. It was a way of getting me home. Well, I had to stay. What could I do? But Polly stayed about a month after I left, and then she came home, too. But you know what? We got jobs up in Claremont, New Hampshire, and we went up to Claremont, New Hampshire, to work.

LEVINE: Now what was in Claremont? Was that another mental--?

BURBA: No, shoe factory, yeah.

LEVINE: Well, did you develop any attitudes about the mentally ill, or insane, from that experience that you had?

BURBA: No, I felt sorry for them. You know, I really felt sorry for them. I'm very chicken-hearted. I would have spoiled them. How can I put it any other way? I would have spoiled them. I talked with them, you know, I tried to talk with them. Well, one day one would be a—well, she liked royalty, I guess—she was an English princess. Another day, she'd be a queen, then she'd be something else. But she liked nobility, I guess, you know, that bent.

LEVINE: Do you remember at all what kind of treatment these people were getting at that time? I mean, this was about what, this was about 1920?

BURBA: Yeah. As far as I know, treatment—I couldn't see where they were getting any treatment, outside of being taken care of, kept clean, you know what I mean? But as far as, I don't ever remember them using any kind of machines, or something, you know, for—no. That's all I know. And they called that the semi-violent ward, that I was in. And they had a violent ward. That I guess was quite bad. You know, they'd get really violent. I suppose you would have to know how to cope with that. And but we had a good time, because, like, on this, beautiful grounds, would be all women. The other side of the grounds were all men. And of course, they had fellows doing the same for their as we had for the women. And we'd get acquainted with the young guys; we used to go dancing with them, you know, Saturdays, and go out with them Sundays. We had the weekends off. So we had a good time besides working the way we did. But it was, to me, it was a great experience. I'm so glad I went, yeah, because I did want to get away from the shoe business. I didn't want to be a shoe worker. But, I finally stayed with the shoes.

LEVINE: When you went back to Claremont, you were making shoes again?

BURBA: Yeah, and then come back to Derry here, and I went to a dance at Beaver Lake, and I met this guy here at the dance, and I started going out with him!

LEVINE: What did you like about him?

BURBA: Well, he dressed nice, you know, and he wore spats and a nice overcoat, nice top hat, you know. He looked so nice, and could dance! I loved dancing!

LEVINE: Was there any Polish dancing, or was it strictly--?

BURBA: No, strictly American, yeah. Over the Beaver Lake, they'd have a orchestra there, and every Saturday we went to Beaver Lake, dancing. And the crowd from Lawrence, we called them the Lawrence gang. Then there used to be a gang from Chelsea, another one from Everett, another one from Haverhill.

They had cottages, you know, these guys did, and they'd come down weekends, and they'd all go dancing, of course. So I met all these guys.

LEVINE: So they would go, and they would have cottages, and they would go, like, say, down on a Saturday, stay over, and then—for the weekend?

BURBA: Yeah, weekends, and they'd go home, because they all worked, too, I guess. And it was wonderful! I became very popular [laughs]. This guy—we started going steady together. Oh, I guess we went together for about a year, and I can remember he used to come down to my house, spend the weekends, and my mother would get up and fix him his breakfast. And I didn't want him to drink, and he was drinking. But my mother would sneak him, you know, the liquor while I wasn't looking, and he would drink it, and it used to make me mad, because I didn't want him to drink. I didn't drink. And anyway, I went out with him for about a year, and one day I get a letter from him, and it says: I'm coming down this weekend, and I have something very important to ask you. Well, now, what would you think?

LEVINE: I would think he was going to pop the question.

BURBA: Yeah, well I did, too! Well, he came Friday night. Saturday night we went dancing—nothing. Sunday, nothing. Well, it was almost time for him to go and grab his bus; he came on the bus, you know. And I thought, "Well, how am I going to tell him? How am I going to ask him?" Because I was shy, too. I wasn't pushy. But we had an old victrola that you cranked by hand, and I put a record on there. And I don't know how it happened it was that record, but it was that song: [sings] "I've something to tell you, so linger a while." "Oh," I said, "Joe, by the way! The letter—you said you had something to ask me." [Laughs] He said, "Yeah, I know." He says, "I will." Well, he did. He popped the question to me before he went home that night, and of course you know I said, "Yes." Well, things went along good. His brother got married. I met his Mom; I met his Dad. I went to his brother's wedding in Haverhill; he was Best Man, and this and that. And they brought me home from the—his sister and her husband brought me home, with Joe in it, from the wedding, to Derry. And I never heard from him again! Isn't that something! But it seems like he didn't get any work in Lawrence, so he went out to New Jersey with a bunch of fellows, some friends of his, a whole bunch of them went. They got jobs out in New Jersey. And I never saw him again 'til ten years ago!

LEVINE: Oh, my goodness!

BURBA: I got married. I married a fellow from Derry.

JOE: I was working in Elizabeth, New Jersey, 1924, when I come back this way. And you say that. I say, you have no proof. I went back to work; I had a

leave of absence. I was working for Roselle Parks outside of Newark, that made the oriental rugs, yeah. And from Elizabeth, New Jersey, we'd go over to Staten Island on a little ferry. At that time they didn't have no—we had trolleys from Staten Island all the way across, to get on the [unclear] to go over to Battery Park in New York. Well, that was in the twenties, until 1926. They built a bridge from Staten Island, the [unclear] Bridge, that goes right into Jersey.

LEVINE: So in other words, you asked your wife—you asked her to marry you, and then you disappeared?

JOE: That's right.

LEVINE: And then, what brought you back here?

JOE: What brought me back? Well, I traveled the country. I was single. I went all around drinking, and this and that. Never married, never married. Then war time broke out; I was in the war.

LEVINE: So when you came back were you looking for her?

JOE: No.

BURBA: I got married—

JOE: I knew she was mad. I had a sister that was friendly with one of her neighbors that lived here. I knew.

BURBA: Yeah, he knew all about me.

JOE: I stopped drinking in 1960. I got all the news, and knew about her, and this and that, and her daughters, and so forth. My sister used to tell me. My first marriage was in 1946.

BURBA: He got married in 1946, and I got married—

JOE: 1946, after the war. And I was going to be forty years old.

BURBA: Yeah, and I was twenty when I married. I got married in 1928.

JOE: So then my wife died, and I knew all about her. My wife died, and before she died I introduced her to my wife up here. My wife died, and after a year and a half after my wife died [unclear] we got married.

LEVINE: So you got married—after he proposed, and then left, then what happened?

BURBA: Well, I met this fellow through Derry, a Derry man, Butterfield, Raymond Butterfield. And I went out with him, and I went out with him for a year, and we got married. And I had five children, all girls. My third baby died; it was born a breach birth. But the other four lived. I have four good daughters, and I had a real rough life. My husband was not what he was supposed to be. He abused me. And if that was today, you know, I could go and get help. In those days, I couldn't. I was stuck! And anyway, I stuck with him. We built a home; I had a nice home in Derry on Everett Street. I brought up my children. I worked. I used to have woman come in take care of my children, you know, while I worked.

LEVINE: Were you working in the shoe factory?

BURBA: Yes, right here, in Klev-Bro [PH] Shoe, right here in Derry. It was right home, you know, and everything. And you won't know, but I was picked Miss Klev-Bro. We had an outing when they first moved here, and I got a job there, and I can see myself now. I was stitching away upstairs in the stitching room, and one of the owners, Mr. Gass, came up, and he came right over to me! He said, "Helen," he says. "We're having an outing." And he says, "We're going to pick Miss Klev-Bro." He says, "Wear a dress, will you?" I didn't know what the heck he was talking about, you know? But I went to the outing, of course. I was on committee. Never mind, they put me on committee. We went to the outing, and wouldn't you know? Governor from New Hampshire was there, Governor Murphy, his name was. He was there. And I got picked Miss Klev-Bro.

LEVINE: How do you spell—that's the name of the company, right?

BURBA: Yeah, Klev-Bro.

LEVINE: How do you spell that?

BURBA: Capital K-L-E-V, dash, and then capital B-R-O, Klev-Bro. It means Klev Brothers. There was two brothers, and then Sam Gass. The others were Louis Klevin, Paul Klevin, Pop Klevin, and Sam Gass. They were all in together. Well anyway, I had—I got picked that, and like I say, Governor Murphy handed me the silver cup, you know, and everything. Got to have my pictures taken, and all that. And I got along good. But my husband was—I can't explain it to you. He didn't want me to have any fun. You know what I mean? He was having his fun; he was stepping out with all kinds of women and this and that, and I knew it. In fact, one of my good friends, Esther Wall, says, "Helen, I'll take you and show you. His car is up there, this woman." And what you're going to hear next, you're going to die! She took me up there. Sure enough, there's his car in her yard. [Unclear] it's all right; Butterfield does it. We sold our house; we moved into this complex here. They just built that, and I thought, "There's my chance to get away

from him.” You know, sold the house, you get half, I’ll get half. And I came down, and I hired the apartment. I looked at it, and that was the understanding. You know what he said? He says, “My name is on that deed,” and he says, “I won’t sell. And you can’t sell unless I agree to it.” So he says, “How do you like that?” Oh, mother of God! After I worked all my life! Here I go, I can’t even get my money back. That’s how stupid I was. I could have gone to a lawyer and find that—probably found out different, huh? But, so I said, “Well, okay.” He said, “Either I got with you, or,” he says, “I’m going to stay here.” I said, “Okay, you come with me.” So he did, and we had an apartment. Not this one here, but one up the other end there. And would you know that today, this woman that I saw his car parked in her yard is living in his apartment that we had there? That’s all right. She sees me every day, but I don’t pay no attention to her! And anyway, I moved there, and we had a—to get acquainted with everybody, we had what they call a covered-dish supper. And everybody brought something, and we had great big tables in the community room, and sat around there, you know, every—my husband wouldn’t go, no. All right, I go. And we were introducing ourselves, and I said, “My name is Helen Butterfield, and I come from Derry, New Hampshire.” And so, and so, and it came to this woman, and she said, “My name is Mary Kenney, and I come from Lawrence, Massachusetts.” And her husband was with her, and he said, “My name is Ed Kenney, and I’m her husband, and I come from Lawrence, Massachusetts.” So went around the table. Later on, we got to talking about nationalities, isn’t that funny? And it come to me, and I says, “I’m Polish.” It come to Mary Kenney. She certainly hasn’t got a Polish name, huh? She says to me, “I’m Lithuanian.” And I thought, “Oh, Lithuanian, and you come from Lawrence.” I says, “Would you by any chance know a Joseph Burba?” She says, “Did I?” She says, “I used to go out with him!” This Mary Kenney. And is says, “You did?” I says, “So didn’t I. I used to go out with him, too!” Well she was very friendly with, because she lived near him, in Lawrence, and she was very friendly with his sister, Alvina. So, one day we got to talking, and his sister, she said, she told her sister about me, and her sister didn’t remember me. And I’d been up to his house, I’d met his Mom and his Dad, but see, they were younger then, and this was years apart. She [laughs] came, and—came to my house here, and she didn’t remember me. She remembered her brother talking about me, but she didn’t remember me at all. So, fine. So then, first thing I know, Mary Kenney and her husband, they go to Lawrence to see Alvina, and they invited me to go with them. So I went. And that’s when I—no, it wasn’t then. I went to his sister’s there, and you know, very nice to me, and this and that, told me all about Joe. Joe was married and had a wife, and this and that, and good. Come home, and about, oh, about a year or so later, I’m making pies, and the telephone rings, and it’s Mary Kenney. She says, “Helen, come over here.” She says, “I want someone to—I want you to meet somebody.” And I said, “Oh, I can’t Mary. I’m all covered with flour; I’m in a mess.” “Oh, come on, come on!” She talked me into it. So I went. And her—the apartment just like this, here, you know. I come to the door. Her couch was

right there, like that, in front of the window. And there's his sister sitting there, another lady sitting there, and Mary Kenney, and her husband. And when I come to the door, Mary Kenney says to me—

LEVINE: She points behind—

BURBA: Yeah, see. So I do, I come through the door and I look. Who the heck is standing there but Mr. Burba! Of course, he'd changed! He used to have beautiful curly hair, and black, you know, and nice rosy cheeks. And I looked. But yet I could tell by his eyes; there was something about his eyes. And I said, "Joseph Burba!" like that. Because I had changed, too, you know. I wasn't the slick chick that I was [laughs]. Anyway, his wife—he introduced me to his wife, and everything. And we had, oh, a great gab, you know, talking about old times and this and that.

LEVINE: What was it like to see him after all this time?

BURBA: Well, if he'd have been single, I'd probably, you know. But married—I said, well, it was nice seeing him, you know, but that was it. And anyway, if he knew that I was going to Lawrence, over to his sister's, he'd be there. And a lot of times we'd go shopping, and Joe would hang onto my arm instead of his wife's arm, you know—friends. Friends, you know, and that's all I thought of it. Well anyway, his wife died. She had—what was it, Joe? She had—she was in a coma for three months.

JOE: She had a lot of operations. She had an aorta bypass, and everything like that, and a heart pacer. And all like that.

BURBA: And she died.

JOE: She died from her pressure, blood pressure, going up through there. And they operated on them twice, once on one side there, and then she went and had a stroke. She had a mass stroke.

BURBA: God love her! She died in January, New Year's Day.

JOE: New Year's Day.

BURBA: Yeah, and my birthday was in February, and I got a nice birthday card from him. And that was all right; that was nice, just signed "Joe." I thought, "Good." And it went along, and I had a friend that—she was a school teacher here. She taught my kid, my Diane, second grade. And I became very friendly with her. And then she moved to Connecticut, Manchester, Connecticut. But she kept in touch with me all these years. And she came down. Well, in the meantime, I left my husband. I told him, I said, "Why don't you get out?" I says, "I'm not happy." I went in the hospital. I had the

mastectomy, and I came home from the hospital. He never went to see me once. He didn't take me to the hospital. My neighbors that lived in this apartment here took me, he and his wife took me to the hospital. They came after me; they brought me home from the hospital and everything. And do you know, I was sitting there, because it was burning, it was [unclear] when I came home, and I was burning there. And I had the fan going on me, and I was sitting on the couch, and he was sitting across from me, like in the chair there. And he'd always have a jug of booze beside his chair. He drank terrible! And I could see him; I knew something was coming. He looked at me, you know, that glare? And he says, "Why the hell don't you go back and have your other tit cut off?" Can you imagine that! Well, I started to cry; I cried. So I knew the lady that did the rentals here, Betty Ipavick. [PH]She was so good to me, God love her! And she knew what I was up against. And she says, "Helen--." I says to her, "I've got to leave him." I says, "I can't take that. My kids are all grown up. They've gone away from me." I says, "I can't take it. The few years I have left I would like to spend in peace." I said, "Would it be possible for me to have an apartment here? Let him stay there?" He wouldn't move. "Let him stay there?" She said, "Of course, I don't know. I'll ask the big boss. A husband and wife living in the same compound, but yet in different apartments, you know, it's against the rules." She says, "I'll see what I can do." He heard me talking on the phone. And about, oh, it was about two weeks later, I get a telephone call from Betty. "Helen, there's going to be an empty apartment. Do you still want it?" And I said, "Yes, I do." So it was over there. And I got it. And my kids—my friends all came, and they helped me move. They moved me out in about two hours' time, I was moved out. And I left him down here. And I left him half of everything, you know what I mean? I didn't want people to say that I left him with nothing. So he got half the—we had twin beds; I left him a bed, and I left him the draperies, the air conditioners, and the drapes there, and everything, you know. And even the couch. I bought a new couch for myself up there. Like, I had to buy a new air conditioner for myself, the other thing. And I had to have a phone put in; I left the phone. And about a month after I left him—of course, he went crying to my daughter in Kingston, and her husband, Moe, said to him, "Look Ray, you've been here four days, and don't think that you're going to stay here with us." He says, "You go home and go see a psychiatrist. You need a psychiatrist." That's just the words he told him! Because he told me afterwards, Moe did.

LEVINE: Wait, we're at the end of the tape now. I want to say that we're end of Tape One, and we'll resume with the rest of your story on the next tape.

BURBA: Oh, is that it? Oh my gosh, am I talking too much?

LEVINE: No, you're fine. I've been speaking with Helen Burba, and we will resume on Tape Two.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE ONE

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE TWO

LEVINE: Okay, we're resuming the interview now, on Tape Two, with Helen Burba. And you were just going to complete the story about how you moved to your own apartment in this complex.

BURBA: Yeah, yeah. And it was so wonderful being along; I loved it! But he started to come in. In April, like I said, my birthday was in February, I got a card from him. In April, he asked me if I would like to go to Atlantic City with him. And I said, "Yeah, I would." And then I got to thinking, "You know, what would my kids think," you know? And I said, "No." So I called him and I said, "No, Joe, I just can't. I can't do that." So he took his brother-in-law on my ticket! And my daughter Mary Lou came over, and I was telling her about it, you know, about Joe wanted me to go to Atlantic City, and I said, "I refused to go with him." And she said, "Ma, what's the matter with you?" What is it she said?

JOE: "It's later than you think!"

BURBA: Oh yeah, "It's later than you think! Why didn't you go, for goodness' sakes?" And I told her how I thought you kids would feel about it. And she said, "This is a new age!" Okay, but I didn't go. Well, it got so that he was bugging me. He called me up. "I got the telephone bill." I said, "So what? What do you want me to do about it?" "Well," he says, "You owe half of it," after I left him all that stuff. And I said, "Yeah, how much is the half?" "Seven dollars and something." Can you imagine that? And then he was living there all by himself, and one day they were mowing the lawn. Some kid was out there mowing the lawn. And he had planted a plant of some kind under his window, and the kid run over it with the lawnmower, and he saw him do it. And he was standing in the window with a hot cup of coffee, and when the kid—he hollered at the kid, and told him what he did to that plant. The kid says, "I'm sorry, I thought it was a weed." And you know what? He threw that hot cup of coffee in the kid's face! Of course, he reported him, and they told him another more incident of any kind, he said, "Out you'll have to go." And Betty told me about it. And anyway, I had this friend, school teacher friend of mine. She came down here to see me, and she knew I had left him and this and that. She says, "Helen, why don't you just divorce him, and get it over with?" And I knew he had insurance, life insurance, you know. It wasn't a heck of a lot, but it was insurance. And I knew he cashed that in while I was living with him, cashed that in, so I knew he didn't have any insurance. She said to me, "If anything happens to him, Helen, you're going to be responsible for him! You're still his wife." So you know what I did? I

went and filed for the divorce. I filed for divorce. My oldest daughter, Joanne, stood up with me as a witness at Exeter. And I got the divorce, and the divorce became final in October, and he died in December! See how close? And I'm glad I didn't have anything to do with it. The kids, you know, took care of it, and everything. I had nothing to do with it, thank God!

LEVINE: So how did you get back with him, then?

BURBA: Well, he found out. His wife died, and he found out I was living alone, so he came down to see me. And like I said, I didn't want—he wanted to marry me, right there. And I said, "Joe, I love it being alone. You don't know what it's like for me, after the life that I've been through." I says, "I love living alone." And then, I don't know from one thing to another. The kids talked me in—they liked him. The kids fell in love with him, and everybody liked him, this and that. So we got married the following May. Yeah, May. And we've been married ever since; it'll be ten years in May. Can you imagine that?

LEVINE: So tell me, do you think the fact that you came here as a little baby, and really lived your whole life in this country—do you think the fact that you started out somewhere else, and immigrated—do you think that had a big effect on the person you became? A big effect on who you are, and how you thought about things?

BURBA: I don't think so, because my mother and father, they weren't educated. And they didn't think you needed an education, and I wanted to have an education in the worst way that you could think of. I had a teacher, Mrs. Adams, in the eighth and seventh, eighth grades. She taught science, and she took a liking to me. And I used to go up to her house after supper, you know, at night. And she used to take me out and show me the different constellations, and the stars, and all this and that. And then she would take me inside. Her husband was the undertaker here in Derry. And she'd take me inside, and she would fix me hot chocolate, and peanut butter and crackers. Can you imagine that? And I never had that up home! I drank coffee, tea, but no hot chocolate, you know. That was nice, with cream on it and everything. That was a big treat for me! Well, you know, and we had a play. She put on a play, and she gave me the leading part in it, Mrs. Adams did. And now this is years and years ago, can you imagine? I still remember the opening lines of that play!

LEVINE: Oh, good! Why don't you say them for the tape?

BURBA: The name of the play was The Spirit of Immigration. I was the Spirit of Immigration. I came out, and my mother made me a real peasant dress, you know, because she was Polish. She knew how they dressed, you know, in Poland. And I had the kerchief, you know, and all. And I came out, and I had a doll in my arms. And the curtain went up, and I was the first one to

speak. We had America. Rhoda Wilson—I remember her name—she was dressed as the American flag, you know? And I had to speak to her, and my words were: “I am the Spirit of Immigration. For many days I have sailed the lonely seas. America, is there no hope for my babes and me?” And I still remember them! And of course, it went along, each state or country from Europe that came and donated something to this country here, you know.

LEVINE: Well, how did you feel about having the lead in that play?

BURBA: Well, oh hey, didn't I feel wonderful! But I was an all-A student. I just made up my mind that I am going to be. I wanted to be. And like I said, she was so good to me, and she gave me that part. And you know what? She says to me, “Helen,” she says, “Are you going to go to Pinkerton?” the high school, you know? And I said, “No,” I said. “I would love to, but I can't.” I was fourteen years old. She says, “Why can't you?” I said, “Well, my mother wants me to go to work. They need me.” And she said, “Do you think if I went to see your folks that they would change their mind about it, because I will put you through. If there's any money involved or anything, I will see to it.” And my mother wouldn't let me, so that was—I could have had a chance. At least I'd get a high school education, and God knows, maybe I would do so well in high school, she might have put me through college, because she thought the world of me.

LEVINE: Did you have words with your mother about that, when she said no?

BURBA: Oh, couldn't! Couldn't talk to my mother like that. My mother was the big boss! Oh, we could never answer my mother, you know, or talk back to her. No, no, no way!

LEVINE: Did your father have an opinion about this?

BURBA: No, my Dad was a drinker. Never abused us; he never laid his hand on me. But he liked to drink, so to him nothing mattered, you know what I mean? He was just happy the way he was, and that's all there was to it.

LEVINE: So, what would you say you're very proud of, that you've done in your lifetime? What makes you feel satisfied that you were able to do?

BURBA: Well, I'm proud that I was a good American. I became a naturalized citizen. I was naturalized.

LEVINE: What was that like for you, to become naturalized?

BURBA: You don't know what that was like! That was like, like the whole world just opened up for me! I had to go to Exeter, you know, and take my—I had to learn some. They asked me different questions, and you had to learn to

answer them. I was married then; I was about twenty-two when I went. And I thought, you know, the American flag, we had to salute it. And it looked so, so good to me! Like, I felt so safe and so proud that I was an American at last, you know? And I've been that way ever since. And of course, my family, my kids mean an awful lot to me. I mean a lot to them. They've been very, very good to me, very good to me. And they love Joe. Joe's been very good to them, too.

LEVINE: Why don't you name your children? Tell me your children's names.

BURBA: My oldest daughter's name is Joanne Priscilla.

LEVINE: And they have married names?

BURBA: She married an Aiken. She married Morris Aiken.

LEVINE: A-C-O-R-N?

BURBA: A-I-K-E-N, Aiken. A-I-K-E-N. And they live in Kingston, New Hampshire. And [pause] shut that off, maybe I can.

JOE: When you see it in the paper about the hundredth anniversary, you've got it. [Tape off/on]

LEVINE: Okay, so we're resuming now, and we're talking about the Wall of Honor, when you found out about the Wall of Honor.

BURBA: Yeah, it was down in Ellis Island. I wanted my name there so bad, so my kids, the four daughters, pitched in twenty-five dollars a piece, and had my name put on there, you know. And I got that certificate back to show that my name was on there. Well, I'm so proud of that, I'll tell you right now! You notice I've got my four daughters that did it, up above it. There's a little Irish girl. She's not Polish, she's Irish, but she's a little immigrant. She came from Ireland, and she was at Ellis Island.

LEVINE: You mean you bought this doll at Ellis Island?

BURBA: I bought that, yes. That's my little shrine, right there. Then right up above you is the plate that came out, the Ellis Island plate, the immigrants. And I've got that. And then we got—a year later, my youngest daughter, like I said—she has a son living out in New York, and they took me to Ellis Island so I could see my name on the wall. That was the—you don't know what that did to me! When I saw that! Well, I had my picture taken—see? There's my hand with my name, right there, where my name is.

LEVINE: A picture of your hand pointing to your name on the wall.

BURBA: Yeah, and this is me, with my hand on where the wall is! I was so proud; you have no idea!

LEVINE: Can you say in any more specific way: why did you feel so proud?

BURBA: I don't know. To think that, that I was part of this great country! You know, that here I've lived here, and I lived through the Depression, never asked for a penny from the government. And we were pretty hard up. We were raising our kids in those days. But you think that I'd ask for a penny of relief of any kind, like they do today? No! I was too proud. I was—I just felt I had the world by—the way I wanted it, you know. It was a funny, funny feeling. And I felt so proud of myself, to think that: here I am, an American; I'm on that wall and everything. Its' wonderful! Wonderful! And I got to tell you something funny. We had neighbors in Windham, and I was living there at the time I became a naturalized citizen. And I was telling this neighbor of mine, Mrs. Lowe, I says, "I'm going to Exeter because I'm going to be naturalized. I'm going to be naturalized." And her little son, Bobby, he was about nine years old, he was sitting there, you know, taking it all in. But he said he came home, his sister Ruth came over, and he said, "You know what, Ruth?" He says, "Helen went to Exeter today to be sterilized!" [Laughs] Well, that's the funniest thing, God love him. Yeah, "Helen got sterilized today."

LEVINE: Well, we need to kind of finish up. If you could say your daughters' names, so we have it on the tape?

BURBA: Yeah, like see, there's the daughter that took me, my youngest daughter, Diane.

JOE: She wants [unclear].

BURBA: Patricia is the second one, Patricia Ann. And my third baby that I lost was Carleen. And then my fourth daughter is Mary Louise, but we call her Mary Lou. And my fifth daughter is Diane Rae, R-A-E, named after her father. His name was Raymond, but we called him Ray. Yeah, so Diane Rae. Those are my children.

LEVINE: Okay, well, and how is this phase of your life, now? How—

BURBA: It's wonderful!

LEVINE: How so?

BURBA: It's—how can I explain it? I don't have a thing to worry about! I have a wonderful husband. He is so good to me! He is so good to my children! My

children just adore him! And he's so good to me! I could have breakfast in bed every morning if I wanted it, and he'd be happy to do it!

JOE: I'm up early.

LEVINE: You're up early! [Laughs]

JOE: I'm up early.

BURBA: Anything I want, I can get.

LEVINE: Well, I think it's wonderful, wonderful!

BURBA: So I'll have almost ten years of it. We had a nice wedding when we got married. We were married in the Methodist church by a minister. We had a beautiful reception in Kingston, where my oldest daughter lives, at the Kingston House there, and everything. So, I'm happy. I'm happy at last, you know, really happy!

LEVINE: Well, that's wonderful.

BURBA: But like I said, I wanted an education so bad, and I never had the chance to. I had the chance, but I couldn't take it. I just couldn't. I was the oldest one.

LEVINE: Well, your life was rich in other ways, like now. Is there anything else before we close, that you would want—we'll look at these pictures after we finish with the tape.

BURBA: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Is there anything else that you'd like to say before we close? Anything about, you know, coming here as an immigrant, growing up in New Hampshire, reuniting with your early boyfriend?

BURBA: Yeah, it was an experience that most people wouldn't go through, that I went through. And I'm so happy that everything has turned out the way it has. I have a nice little place here; I'm contented. And I'm contented with Joe, and my children all love me. They're good to me. And not only that, I have beautiful grandchildren, and they're all smart, very smart. What else do I need, huh?

LEVINE: That's a lot.

BURBA: Isn't that wonderful?

LEVINE: It is. It is.

BURBA: So, America's been good to me! What else can I say?

LEVINE: Okay, I think that's a great place to stop. I've been speaking with Helen Burba. This is Tape Two, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. It's November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1995. We're in Derry, New Hampshire, and I'm signing off.

END OF INTERVIEW