EI-752
ROSE WEINSTEIN
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HUNGARY, 1913
8

SHIP:
PORT:
RESIDENCES:

LEVINE: Okay, today is May 24th, 1996 and I'm here in Florida in Hollywood, Florida, with Rose Weinstein who came from Hungary on November 6th—she remembered—1913, when she was eight years of age. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and Mrs. Weinstein is ninety years of age at the time of this interview.

Okay, if we could start at the beginning. If you would say where in Hungary you were born and your birth date?

WEINSTEIN: Well, I was born, the name of the city is A-R-A-D, Arad. There's a city by that name in Israel, but there they pronounce it A-rad. We pronounced it Ar-ad in Hungarian. It was then part of Hungary. After the First World War, it became part of Romania.

JL: And your birth date?

PP: I was born October the 7th, 1905. Needless to say, I don't remember that.

JL: When you—did you live in the same town of Arad up until the time you left for the United States?

PP: Yes, we did because we had family there.

JL: What kind of family? What members of your family?

PP: Well, my mother had two sisters and a brother and brother-in-law. When we moved there, I think that was all. That time both her parents had passed on, but they were buried in the cemetery in Arad. I had occasion to go fifteen years ago. I went back to Hungary to what is now Romania to my birth place because I wanted to visit my mother's grave. I don't know. Did my sister tell you anything about that?

JL: I don't recall that, no. Would you like to talk about that?

PP: Well, I would say that that is one of the most, I think, memorable and poignant memories that I do have because I was six years old when my mother died. My mother was pregnant in her eighth month with her fifth child and she went to a funeral in January 1912, slipped and fell and both the baby and my mother died, as a result of hemorrhaging from the fall on the icy street. It was because of that that we arrived—that we left Hungary and came to the United States.

JL: What was your mother's name?

PP: Merriam. Her maiden name Saltzer, S-A-L-T-Z-E-R. Merriam.

JL: Okay, and your father, what was his name?

PP: Emil.

JL: E-M—

PP: E-M-I-L.

JL: And you didn't have grandparents that you knew of?

PP: No. No. We did not. Not any more. They died before.

JL: Uh-huh. So, can you talk a little bit about Arad.

PP: Very little because when I went back fifteen years ago, as I said, to visit my mother's grave, I didn't recognize a thing. Nothing looked even vaguely familiar. I went to the area that we lived in. I went to even—I was in Budapest. I was born—not born in Budapest, but my parents had lived there and my mother, when she came to Arad from Budapest, she liked what she saw and she decided that she didn't want to live in Budapest anymore. So she—in those days you didn't telephone because you didn't have a telephone. She must have written my father or I don't know how. My father didn't—the reason that my mother came to Arad is because her mother had died and—

JL: And she is in the cemetery there?

PP: Yes.

JL: My grandmother.

PP: My grandmother and grandfather and my mother are in the same cemetery. Different sections. There's practically nothing that I can say looked familiar to me or came back to me as a memory, memorabilia of any kind that would indicate any former residence there or any familiarity with anything. Nothing.

JL: Do you recall anything from those early years, up until eight years old that you can visualize in your mind from that time?

PP: Well, I would say that up to that time I think I was somewhat of a tomboy. In my family I had four sisters—three sisters older than I. One younger, but I had a cousin, a boy cousin who was perhaps a year older than I, but at that age it didn't make much difference, and I was too busy having fun.

JL: What kinds of things can you recall?

PP: Well, I remember we were climbing and we were playing ball and we chasing one another and the kind of things that I guess kids do. I don't remember that we played any games, but we probably did, in our own childish way. But, you know, I guess I lost my—the overwhelming sorrow which took place at that point when I was six years old, probably obliterated anything that might have been of importance up to that point. I knew that my mother died and I knew that I was—I saw the funeral and although I was not taken to the cemetery, but I was well aware and that was the most—that was at that time the most important thing.

Consequently, of course, when it—the Jewish custom, a man should not live alone. My father had four children, four girls. The oldest was fourteen. I was six. I was the youngest—by that time the youngest one had died. During the week of shiva [PH], the neighbors were all talking to my father about marrying. "You need a mother for your girls," that sort of thing, which I am sure I must have heard about and probably was upset about, but I can't pinpoint it as something that I remember. Except that it was much talked about. But consequently, because of that, this one aunt of mine—am I talking too long?

JL: No, I'm just making sure that everything's working correctly.

PP: This one aunt of mine, my mother's younger sister, suggested to my father that he write to another sister who lived in America, an older sister who was all together I think eleven or thirteen months older than my mother and they were two of thirteen children. This was the first born, the oldest of the girls who had never married. She came to America, to the United States. We didn't talk about the United States in those days. It was America. How she came, we don't know. We know she came by ship, there was no other way. She couldn't walk. She couldn't fly. She couldn't take a train, and ask her to come and help raise her nieces, and he did. He took this aunt's advice, wrote to her. To my recollection, now why I should remember and my older sisters never remembered. They say it was my imagination, but I distinctly remember that when he wrote and the response he got was "If you will agree to come to America with your children and me, I will come to Arad to marry you, to be a mother to my nieces, but only on condition that you will promise," and he did. He promised and we came.

By that time, she came in—well, I think it was March or April and in June they were married.

JL: What month was it that your mother had died?

PP: In December of 1912. This was a year later. They were married—no. Yes. They were married in June 1913 and my sister, the one whom you interviewed, was born April 25th—wrong, she was born in 1913. So I was wrong. She came in 1912 and my sister was born in April 1913 and in November we were on—we arrived November 1913 we arrived with a six month old babe in arms because she was born in April, and that's when we came to the United States. All seven of us.

JL: What was your new mother's name, your aunt?

PP: Rosa.

JL: Rosa.

PP: Saltzer.

JL: And do you remember when she first arrived?

PP: No, because I don't remember that we were taken to—well, you'll have to remember that she arrived in Germany probably. It might have been Bremen. I don't know whether it was or it wasn't. I can't say.

JL: But when she came to Arad, do you—

PP: Well, she must have come by train and no, I can't say that I remember when she arrived. I don't remember. I have a picture of when they were married and it was taken. You may have seen it at my sister's. No, you may not.

JL: I don't recall it, but it's been a while.

PP: No, you might not because I mean we're talking now about my mother and her mother, were two different people, and where I have a picture of my mother and my father and all us kids, and even the baby that was younger than I, who subsequently died and then she was pregnant again and died as a result of that and the fall. I have very little recollection of when she arrived or how she took over or when they were married. It just became a natural thing. I never had any feeling about her, other than she was my mother. Strange?

JL: So you—

PP: I should have been old enough to know or to see a difference or to have the awareness. I didn't. I became acclimated to the circumstances such as they were.

JL: Did you go to school at all?

PP: Yes, two years.

JL: And do you recall anything about that?

PP: Nothing.

JL: As it compared with school after you got to this country?

PP: I can't make any comparison. It's like a blank. That's why when you called me about interviewing me, I called my sister a day or two after that and I spoke to her about it. I said, "You know, there's so little—"

JL: [Coughing]

PP: Would you like a drink of anything.

JL: Excuse me.

PP: I said to my sister, "I don't know that there's really anything that I would be able to contribute."

JL: Well, I think the story in itself was very interesting. That that kind of thing happened, how the family happened to come to this country. I mean it's really quite dramatic.

PP: Well, yes, because you see, my aunt, my mother's sister who had come here. We don't know when. We have never been able to get any—it seems that some of the archives have—there was a fire at Ellis Island, were destroyed in that fire. We couldn't find out and my sister did try. She had written. She had a lot of correspondence in Washington, thinking maybe if she could find out something about the ships that were coming from that area to the States. They were of no help to her at all, but there was no way that she could get any further information and we just don't know.

JL: Well, is there anything in particular that stands out in your mind about Arad? Arad?

PP: That's all right. Whichever way you say it, it's all right.

JL: That you can recall from before you left? Is there anything—

PP: Not really. You know, the whole thing I guess was the newness of the circumstances that were thrust upon us. I do know that we had to go on a train. I do know, I remember that we had to—that they. I had nothing to do with it. I was too young. To dismantle the furnishes, the house. I know that a lot of dishes were packed to ship. We, you know, probably got on the ship somehow. I don't know how. I'm sure there was a great deal of excitement. I can't say I remember.

JL: Do you remember Bremen before you boarded the ship?

PP: Not at all, except that we were on a train. I remember that we carried whatever food we needed with us on the train and to the ship. I mean, we had to be self-sustaining. There was no way. You didn't go out and buy lunch. Things were very different then than today.

JL: Do you recall at all the particular foods that you brought with you?

PP: Well, a lot of chicken. The kind of food that could be prepared and you didn't have to be concerned about refrigeration. Well, I guess we arrived here in November, so it had to be autumnal weather in October when we left Arad to go to Germany to, you know, by train. I don't know whether we—did we do it overnight? I don't know. I can't remember. I guess it was something we never really talked about and memories come a great deal from continuing conversation, rehashing things, you know. It was different then.

JL: Do you know if you came steerage on the ship?

PP: We did not come steerage, that much I know. Although we had to clear through Ellis Island, there were a lot of people who didn't. We were not—well, we had our own room. Seven of us were in one room. Seven of us, of course, the baby was six months old, but she was included. I mean she was a passenger. I know that the one particular thing that stands out in my mind and I think maybe we never had it at home were the huge grapes that we were able to eat as much as we wanted. That was a luxury item. Did we eat the food that they supplied us with on board ship? I don't know. I can't imagine that my stepmother could have brought enough food for a whole family to last us until—I don't even know how many days we were onboard ship.

JL: At that time—

PP: It could have been two weeks.

JL: It could have been even three weeks.

PP: I don't think so. I don't know. I can't say. I don't know because I don't know the dates preceding our arrival. Possibly, the only reason that I'm so aware of the date of arrival is that my father took out papers and of course the day—on my father's papers we

all became citizens. We were all under age and the date, of course, became a thing to remember. I had to have it for school, you know. So it was very different, you see, and yet I can't say that I remember it, but I know that the school in Arad that I went to was a religious school, really. We were Jews and we went to a Jewish school. Gentile children went to a different school. Now, did we pay? Did my father had to pay for that? I don't know.

JL: Did you learn Hebrew and did you learn—

PP: No, I can't say that I did because my Hebrew came in much later in my life, after I was married, and I took some Hebrew lessons because I wanted to be able to read the prayer book and follow the prayers and the only way I could do that is if I could make out the symbols, know the alphabet. And I learned it.

JL: Do you remember when the ship came into the New York Harbor? Can you recall that part of the trip?

PP: Well, I assume there must have been a great deal of excitement, as usual. I can't say that I do, but you see, now the one thing that I know has been so highlighted was the fact that one of my sisters, for some reason, either she misunderstood or—you know, we were very fortunate because my aunt, my stepmother could understand and speak English, and she was able to smooth the way. Yet, in spite of that and I don't know why, but they were talking, the marked in chalk an X on my sister's back. Now, this sister who was singled out for that was two years older than myself. So she was the third. I was the fourth. The symbol of the X chalked on her back was that she was going to be shipped back. Now, how do you take a ten year old child away from the family and ship her back? But apparently there was some talk about it and some danger of it, and whether it was because my aunt could speak to them and make them understand that she didn't answer the question properly. But we all came in together, that much I know.

JL: So it was never clear why the X was put on her back?

PP: So much is unknown.

JL: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So did you stay overnight at Ellis Island?

PP: No.

JL: No.

PP: No, we had aunts and uncles living in Manhattan, whom my stepmother had brought over during the time that she was here in the States, in America. She was the only one. She got her alone. How she did it, only God knows.

JL: And was she working?

PP: She was a working woman. When she first came—in those days, the only kind of work that a woman was capable of, a young woman, and I would say that she was very close to twenty or in that age vicinity, that she could cook. Being the firstborn of thirteen children, she told us stories of how she stood on a stool or a box to help her mother with preparation of food, with cutting noodles and she would show how she chopped the noodles with the knife to make them fine. So she was an experienced cook and she got a job in Newark, New Jersey with a Jewish family who hired her as a cook or an assistant, I don't know. I assume she was doing some cooking, and I don't know how long she stayed there, but she did stay a while, I'm sure.

But she wound up in New York and she was doing factory work and during the time, of course, that she was working as a cook I assume she massed some dollars. The salary that she got was all salary because she didn't have any expenses. Couldn't have been a hell of a lot because I remember having a girl, taking a girl, a Hungarian girl off the ship. Now, my son just had his sixtieth birthday and this goes back, I would say, pretty close to sixty years ago when I wanted to have a girl. We could afford it and I got a girl through the agency on 72nd Street and 3rd Avenue. Are you a New Yorker? Okay. It was a Hungarian agency there. I contacted them. I told them I can speak Hungarian and the only word she could say was "Hallo." "Hallo." I'd teach her everything and at that time, now that's—he was born in 1936 and at that time I think I paid her twenty dollars a month.

So how much could my aunt have been getting a good many years before that? Like housework, you know, was her pay, but yet she managed to make some money, get some money together, brought over one sister and one brother and a brother-in-law and a sister. Went to Europe a couple of times during that period. How did she do it? We don't know. You know, in those days you didn't ask questions.

JL: No.

PP: You sat down to eat, you ate. You didn't talk. Things were so different and that's the only thing I attribute it to. You weren't supposed to ask questions.

JL: Do you recall where you went when you left Ellis Island? Where the family settled?

PP: Yes, my aunt and uncle had an apartment for us on 66th Street between First and Second Avenue. I think it was a four-story walkup. Well, you would call it a cold water apartment, I guess, and all I can tell you is that my aunt, my mother, my stepmother was very disappointed and angry to think that she brought them here. She paid their passage to bring them here. She supported them until they were able to support themselves. That they thought that she would be satisfied with this kind of living quarters was a real deep hurt to her, and we stayed there all of six months until she found an apartment that suited her, that she felt what the apartment should have for a family of five children and two adults and we moved to 86th Street. Also I Yorkville.

JL: Uh-huh. Do you have any firsts, things that you saw that were new and different that struck you right off during those first weeks?

PP: I can't say that I do. I mean I—nothing that I can pinpoint. I mean we assumed everything was supposed to be the way it was, and that's it.

JL: And so then you settled on 86th Street and did you stay there a while?

PP: Well, we lived on 86th Street I think maybe—I don't know how many years, but we moved. From 86th Street, we went to 79th Street, but always between First and Second Avenue, Second and Third Avenue, in that same where there were a lot of Hungarians and Germans and Czechoslovakians. It was 1928 we moved to Brooklyn. That I remember the year. Of course, I was by that time quite a young woman. So between 1905 and '28 I was twenty-three years old.

JL: So you finished school in Yorkville?

PP: I did. I just finished my eighth grade. I registered in high school and I didn't want to go to high school. I refused to go to high school.

JL: Why was that?

PP: Well, it was one of circumstances, financial circumstances and I used to see one of my sisters, particularly the next to the oldest sister who used to cry "I need a new skirt. I need a new pair of shoes," and that kind of thing and I said, "I don't want it." I was a very independent cuss. I don't want to cry. I want to go to work. I want to earn my own way. I want to be able to support myself, not have to go to my father, but I brought my salary home. I started to work—well, my first job I don't think I was getting five dollars a week and when my oldest sister heard that, she made me quit my job. Nobody works for that kind of money. You should be getting more money. Well, by that time she was a designer. They called her a sample hand first and she became a designer. When she got married, she was making sixty dollars a week, which was a very handsome salary.

I got marred in 1931. It was the height of the Depression and I was making forty dollars a week as a bookkeeper. My husband was drawing twenty-five dollars a week as a CPA. America was very good to us.

JL: How did you meet your husband? Was he also from Hungary?

PP: No, he was born in Brooklyn. No, he was born on the East Side. They went to Brooklyn when he was a year and a half old, but he was actually born in the East Side where the family lived at that time and they wound up in Brooklyn, in East New York, Brooklyn. He was one of five boys and the last child was a girl. They're all gone.

And that's one of those things, you know, I regretted. There were years I felt I should have gone to high school. I shouldn't have been so determined to make my way. Eventually that would have happened, too, but I just resented the fact that—and I was really first one given the opportunity to go. The others all had to go to work. So I rejected it and stood back and I wouldn't go and I didn't.

END OF SIDE A
BEGIN SIDE B

JL: And how about your father, what had he been doing for work in Hungary?

PP: He had been doing outdoor work, which a cousin of mine who was still alive at that time in Arad and whom I saw when I was there fifteen years ago, related his kind of work to what he knew

of American Express. Actually, he must have been driving a truck or a cart or had a horse and wagon, let's say, in those days, and it was outdoor work. Whether he was a truck man, I don't know. I mean I never—the clearest picture I ever got of his work was when I saw my cousin fifteen years ago. He since has passed on, and when we came here—when we came to New York, one of my uncles, one of my mother's sister's husband was working as a presser in a factory and he took my father in hand. Couldn't speak English and he took him to—they needed help and he took him there to work. Well, my father couldn't adjust to working indoors with a steam iron or whatever kind of an iron it was, and soon enough he left there. Didn't want to stay and he wound up—he saw somebody—this is to the best of my recollection—washing windows on First Avenue near where we lived with a pail and a ladder and a chamois and he equipped himself and he went around to the storekeepers and got work. He became a window cleaner.

JL: And did he keep—and that was what he continued to do?

PP: He continued doing that as long as he was able to work. He died, he was sixty-three, of a heart attack, but by that time we had moved to Brooklyn and the reason we moved to Brooklyn was because he already had had his first heart attack, and we were going to go to the Bronx and the doctor negated that because he said the Bronx has a lot of hills and he should not be in an area where he would be climbing hills. Brooklyn is flat. He recommended that we go there and we did. So—but these are not important facts for you to have in an Ellis Island tape.

JL: Well, it's interesting that your father came to this country and that he started—

PP: Well, two years after we came to this country, my father wanted to go back to Europe.

JL: Why was that?

PP: Because he found it difficult and he was trying to learn English, which he found difficult. My sister has some letters that he wrote and his spelling was just the way, phonetic. The way he talked, that's how he wrote and she still has some of these letters that he wrote. He was having a rough time of it and he was ready to give it up and go back. Never did.

JL: Did his attitude change or he would have really preferred to have gone back?

PP: I don't know. You know, you didn't discuss things that like with your parents. You were a kid. You never grew up enough. I don't know whether you realized that, but we lived through it and maybe we weren't even aware of it because you had no basis for comparison. There were people living on the same street where we lived, especially when we were on 79th Street. Well, by that time I guess I was old enough to have the awareness that they were in much better circumstances than we were financially. That they lived a very high style, as compared to the way—we always had a lovely, clean apartment, but nothing luxurious. Your needs were taken care of, but these people had luxuries and you could see the difference. It was just a half a block away from where we lived, going towards the river. It made a big difference, but that's life.

JL: Did you—do you—is there anything else about the Depression and how it affected you in particular and your family?

PP: Not really because we were very fortunate in that my husband had already in 1931 established his own practice as a CPA. I was till working. My first child was born five years after we were married because we didn't want to start a family too soon. We had to have a little nest egg to save for the rainy day and we did. I can only live the way I live here because of my thrifty disposition. I had to teach my oldest sister to save. I was eight years younger. I already from the time that I started to work, and I had to give my salary to my mother or my father, whatever I was given, I always saved something from that. I always knew that you didn't just spend it all and I actually taught her and she was making good money. She didn't have a penny to her name until I showed her that I was doing it and if I could do it 'you can do it.'

JL: Do you think there were any attitudes or values that you got from your stepmother or your mother even before that, or your father? Values, rules for living or ideas that were instilled in you?

PP: Well, my father was a strict disciplinarian, always.

JL: What was he strict about?

PP: About how we behaved primarily. I mean he didn't concern himself with how we did in school. That was a woman's place, and I don't know that he ever went to—whether parents were

required or requested to come to school during my lower grade time or just the mother came. The father was working. He had no time to come. Nowadays, maybe, you know they manage. Values, yes. You had—you were taught how to be honest. How to be decent. How to have consideration for others and that was always very basic and important. And I taught my children the same thing. Maybe not as strict a disciplinarian although my son tells me I was. So—and not with regret, thank goodness. He thought I was at the time, but he realizes. He's got his own kids. That it was right. I don't really know what else to attribute. My mode of living, all from my parents, I would say, and of course, my contact with other people who were usually in the same circumstances. Although later in life, a lot of our friends had a hell of a lot more money than we did. We never tried to keep up with them and they understood. If we went any place, it had to be where we could afford to go and carry our weight. That was very important. You didn't feel like the small fry.

JL: When you think back about the fact that you came here as an eight year old and made your whole life here really, how do you think about that? The fact of having immigrated as a child and lived out your life here?

PP: Well, I can only say that I think we were very fortunate coming here as we did when we did, because then the war broke out. We came in November and in April there was—April 1914 war started. We were here. We were safe. We were lucky, and I would say we've been lucky ever since. Industrious, hardworking people, very aware of our background as foreigners particularly because foreigners were frowned upon or looked down upon. They were never considered on the same level as people who were born here.

JL: Really? Give me—

PP: By people who were born here.

JL: Can you think of any instances where that was at issue?

PP: Well, I never had an accent so I mean in that respect I've been very fortunate. So that it wasn't obvious if you spoke to anybody that you were speaking with a foreign accent so you were somewhat a foreigner. Somewhere you came from that you weren't born here. So you can't—and yet I very well remember, I guess I must have been—or it must have been in the '40s. I had both my kids by then, and somebody said to me, "They ought to

send you back where you came from." How did he know where I came from? That I came from any place but the United States. Maybe from another state, but certainly my accent didn't make him aware of the fact that I'm not an American born. Nobody ever thought I was a foreigner. When anybody hears me speak Hungarian, to this day they think, "Where did you get it?" you know.

JL: Did that affect you when that person said that?

PP: Oh, very much because it was—I think it may have been during the Second World War in the '40s, yeah. To think that he was a taxi driver. He resented the fact that those of us who were driving down to the station to pick up our husbands after a day's work were parked in an area where he was inconvenienced and he got fresh. That was the final payoff. But I mean, for no reason. It was just a nasty thing, you know. I can't say that it affected me for very long. It stayed with me.

JL: No, but—

PP: It's something that I knew he had no right to say and more's the pity that he was the ignorant one, you know. But I can't say. I have always been very conscious of the fact that this country has been very good to all of us, and there's Ellis Island over there. The first one is where we became—

JL: Careful with the microphone.

PP: Huh?

JL: Be careful because you have the microphone.

PP: Oh, right. I forgot. [Laughs] Oh, yes, here is the wall. This my niece sent me. Oh, you probably recognize it, WEI. Yeah, who came to America from Hungary. That was in 19—when? '86. 1886-1986. Oh, this is in Israel. Operation Exodus. Oh, proud to owner Irving Eisenburg [PH] and Rose Weinstein who come to the United States and overcame great odds in the search for opportunity and freedom.

JL: Now, do you feel as though you held on—I think you mentioned that you're aware of your background. When you say that, are there some traditions that are Hungarian or were you thinking of Jewish? What is it that you—

PP: I can't say that there are traditions that are Hungarian because I was too young to have a carry over of any traditions. I love Hungarian music, but particularly music that I'm familiar with. I sang when I was a kid and I had a ninetieth birthday in October, a very beautiful birthday party that my children and my grandchildren made me, right here in the building, and they had the musicians. They made sure that they could play Hungarian music, the kind of music that I enjoyed and we did the Chobauch [PH] and had a great time, and had a beautiful, beautiful party. Other than that, yes, we always have joined a temple, during the time my husband was alive and since he's gone. I joined the temple with one of the—that and having a doctor were two of the most important things whenever we moved into any area, which were musts. We always became members of a temple, looked up a doctor or got acquainted with friends, "What doctor do you use?" and that sort of thing.

I can't say that any of that is Hungarian, except that basically I know I'm a Hungarian and I think I'm well adjusted and acclimated to my circumstances in this country and most grateful. That I can't repeat often enough.

JL: How about your aunt and your father, did they become Americanized?

PP: Oh, very much. Oh, yes. Yes, very much. Of course, my father died sixty-three. Compared to today he was still a young man. He learned to enjoy living in America, to be with people and the conveniences and the comforts of whatever was available to him. We all felt that way.

JL: I know there was a large Hungarian population in Yorkville. When you moved to Brooklyn, were there also a number of Hungarians?

PP: Not at all. No, it had nothing to do. We moved to a certain area of Brooklyn because one of my sisters lived in that vicinity. In fact, two of them were living in Brooklyn already. They were married and so we felt it was the logical area to be in, but it had nothing to do with the fact that there were no Hungarians there because we had our own lives. You know, our own friends, all of us, but it had nothing to do with the fact of whether they were Hungarian or not.

JL: Do you remember in Yorkville any kinds of Hungarian groups, social occasions?

PP: Oh, yes, there were. Well, to this day there are some Hungarian societies. We were never really a part of that. I don't think my parents were, either. Well, I think maybe the fact that my aunt had already had become Americanized by the time she came to Europe to marry my father and I would say she was at most maybe twenty when she came to the States and was already well in her forties when she married my father.

JL: Oh.

PP: She was in her early forties when her one and only child was born, which is a rarity in itself that she should be a normal, healthy individual, thank God. But in many areas I would have to say we were very lucky. We were and I'm always very grateful.

JL: And what was your husband's name?

PP: Harry.

JL: And how many children did you have?

PP: I had two children.

JL: And their names?

PP: Edward is my oldest. Edward was just sixty. He is a CPA, a partner in one of the big six. A senior partner in one of the big six. He's got to retire in two years. He has to retire at sixty-two. And I have a daughter who is three years younger than my son. She's fifty-seven. Her birthday is today and she finished college. She went to Wheaton and she graduated from Brooklyn. Her boyfriend graduated from MIT and he was back in Brooklyn and she decided she didn't want to be up there while he was down here. She moved and she works for the State of New Jersey in their Geriatrics Department, so she's very familiar with old people's health and accommodations for their health and the kind of things that are being done or not being done. They have children. My son has a son and a daughter, and my daughter has a son and two daughters. So I have five grandchildren and one great grandchild. One of my grandchildren is married and has a child, will be a two year old. So that's my whole family.

JL: Yeah. Well, when you look back on your life, what would you say gives you a lot of satisfaction, makes you feel proud and satisfied?

PP: Well, I imagine, if you can call it pride, perhaps I flatter myself when I say I think I did a good job. With all the handicaps, and there were, and I don't stress them, but I'm sure that there were handicaps that we had to put up that a lot of other people born here, parents educated here, living under different circumstances. Certainly not having to cope with a lot of things that we did, which I to this day feel it was just part of life. I mean I accepted it as part of life, but I feel that I'm grateful for everything that happened that taught me to do whatever I did that turned out to be right. I raised two children, thank God, and they are raising their children and I'm very proud of that and the way they're being raised. My five grandchildren, I talk to them regularly. They call me. We're in touch. What more can I tell you? I feel that whatever—I mean, a lot of things you do or you don't do that you should do, and eventually you feel, "Well, I messed up on this or that and this I should have done." But I think that considering that I lost my husband twenty-nine years ago. He was sixty-six when he died, and I have done—carried on, on my own. He was only a CPA, had his own practice. Didn't amass a fortune. Didn't leave much when he died. There was a very small estate, such as it was, and I've done very nicely with managing very well and able to continue to live the lifestyle that he would have wanted me to live. I don't consider myself brilliant. I didn't have any education. So where did it come from? It just had to be in me to do the things I did, that's all. I can't say. I mean, I have friends who have gone to college and I can't say that they have any reason to be any more proud or happy with their circumstances than I have. And I look back on my life as being very lucky to begin with, and accomplishing whatever I felt I should do, which was properly raise my children and have a happy life.

JL: And how about your life now, now that your children are grown and you're able to have you—

PP: Well, I never felt that I—we were supposed to come down here together, my husband and I. He already had semi-retired because of his health. He had a heart attack when we were in Hawaii after a tax season vacation, and when we got back home, he had a client, a hospital client. We were living in Flushing at that time, and he went to see the doctor, but, no, first he had to take care of his clients for two weeks before he had time to make an appointment to see a doctor about his heart. His doctor put him right into the hospital at that time, probably should have gone in as soon as we got home. But to him it was most important that he take care of his clients and he did. And we were—we had decided that he ought to turn his practice over to a couple of the

men who were working for him and come down to Florida and take life easy. It didn't happen that way because then he had a bad heart attack and I decided we were going to do it together and I'm going to do it alone. My lease was up and I shipped my furniture down. I had one sister living down here, and rented an apartment. I said, "If I don't like it, I can always go back," and I didn't. I stayed. And I have friends who have come down. A couple of friends across the street I've known for over fifty years. We've been friends. We all belong to the same temple. We lived in the same community and we've kept in touch and I have a lot of new friends. I can show me my ninetieth birthday party album with all the people that were at my party and the gaiety and the happiness. It was really great. My children did a beautiful job and I'm very happy about that.

This is how they wanted to honor me. They wanted me to come up north and have a party up there in with the family and then "have a party in your building, mother, if that's what you want and we'll come down for that." And I said, "No way. I'm going to have one party or no party. If I'm going to have one party, I want it right where I've been living for the last twenty-eight years. This is my home. You all come down, otherwise forget it. Let's not have a party." Well, we had a party and we had it right here, and it was done beautifully. So a certain amount of respect is very important. Very important and I'm happy to say my children have respect for me and I for them. I never felt that I wanted to live too close to them because they have their lives to live. I didn't want to be a burden to anyone. That's part of my very independent nature. That's why I didn't go to high school. I was too independent.

So I've managed very nicely, I think. I mean, I can't say I regret at this point. I did the best I could and here I am.

JL: Well, I think maybe that's a good place to end, and you look wonderful. I have to put that on the tape as well.

PP: Thank you. I'm very fortunate.

JL: And I just want to say I've been speaking with Rose Weinstein, who came from Hungary in 1913 when she was eight years of age, and this is May 24th, 1996 and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing off.

END OF INTERVIEW