

**EI-761**

**LILLIAN HENTELL**

**BIRTHDATE: JUNE 14, 1922**

**INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 25, 1996**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 74**

**RUNNING TIME: 40:00**

**INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: PAUL SIGRIST**

**INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND RECORDING STUDIO**

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**RUSSIA, 1922**

**BORN ON THE SHIP**

**SHIP: SAMLAND**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES:**

SIGRIST: Good afternoon, this is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1996. I'm at the Ellis Island Recording Studio, using the portable digital equipment and I'm here with Lillian Hentell. Mrs. Hentell was born on the ship, the Samland. She was born on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1922. Her mother, who was traveling with a brother and a sister and Mrs. Hentell's eighteen month—year old brother. They were coming from Russia at that time and coming to the United States. Present also in the room is Mrs. Hentell's cousin, Lillian Robinson. She is her first cousin. For the sake of the tape, I want to say that we are near a great deal of computer equipment, which is giving off sort of a slow droning sound. So that may be picked up on the tape.

Mrs. Hentell, what's your maiden name?

HENTELL: My maiden name is—was Lillian Karolinsky, shortened to Karol.

SIGRIST: Spell Karolinsky for me.

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HENTELL: K-A-R-O-L-I-N-S-K, we spelled it with a Y, but our letter advising of my birth had an I on the end.

SIGRIST: Okay, and what was changed to?

HENTELL: K-A-R-O-L, when my father received his derivative papers.

SIGRIST: In what year?

HENTELL: 1928.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about—let's start with your father. What was his name?

HENTELL: His name was Henry.

SIGRIST: And tell me about what he did in Russia.

HENTELL: Ah, his father was the pharmacist of the village and I believe he assisted his father.

SIGRIST: Do you know anything about his family background or—and what do you know about your father's background, I guess is what I'm asking?

HENTELL: Well, they—during World War I, an older brother went into the Russian service and he was never heard from again. One brother migrated to Cuba and one brother, his younger brother with whom he came, lived near us for a while and then moved to the Chicago area.

SIGRIST: That was here in the States?

HENTELL: Yes.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Do you know—do you know how your parents met in Europe?

HENTELL: Ah, no, I don't. Ah, I don't recall that, but—I better not say it. But they—I know after they married, they lived with a—a family by the name of Adler. Should I say it?

SIGRIST: Well, that's up to you, if there's something that you want to say.

HENTELL: Well—well, their—these people—their daughter eventually was—wrote a book. Her name was Polly Adler, when they came out here. It was called A House Was Not a Home—is Not a Home, and she was a madam.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's interesting.

HENTELL: Yeah, and my—my brother used to visit them when they settled in New York City.

SIGRIST: Once they got here.

HENTELL: And then they came out to California and unfortunately when I got to see them, they were two little people, the husband and wife, who came to my mother's funeral, and that's the first time I met them.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

HENTELL: Her name was Sarah Primak.

SIGRIST: Can you spell Primak, please.

HENTELL: P-R-I-M-A-K.

ROBINSON: P-R-E-M-A-C-K.

HENTELL: P-R-I—well, we spelled it P-R-I-M-A-K.

SIGRIST: And tell me about what you know about your mother's family background.

HENTELL: Well, her mother was to come to the United States with them, but unfortunately she died from pneumonia or some respiratory illness.

ROBINSON: [unclear] father [unclear].

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Lillian, no, that's all right, that's all right, but—

HENTELL: Yeah, I was going to say. Her father—her husband, my grandfather who's name was Max, was here. He would go back every so often and finally evidently the family had accumulated enough money to send for my mother. My cousin Lillian's mother came out first, and then—her name was Rose, and then they sent for the next youngest daughter, whose name was Fanny. So they came out ahead of my mother, and they were unmarried at the time.

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SIGRIST: What—what do you know about life in Europe, around the time of World War I? What did your parents relay to you in their later years about their experiences living in Russia?

HENTELL: Well, there were the pogrommes. My mother had to jump from a second story—when the Cossacks came into the town while she was pregnant with my brother, I heard—we had a second cousin—you want to go—hear all this? That was tied to two horses and torn apart, and I have a—my sister's mother-in-law's brother was hit over the head and they split his skull open. And there were—

SIGRIST: So the pogrommes were something that they talked about later on that had been an important—

HENTELL: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Part of their lives.

HENTELL: Also, during World War II, my—

SIGRIST: World War II? World War I?

HENTELL: Yeah. I mean World War I, my youngest—my mother's youngest sister, Edith, who was on the ship--she was one of the teenagers on the ship—said that life was very hard. The Russian Army would come in or the German or the Polish and they'd have to—she was young and going to school and they'd have to learn the language of each army that had invaded the area. And we were told that even though they had—there was money, which they had none, there was no way to buy food because of the army invasions. Their mother was very enterprising. She was an intelligent woman and she—I believe she leased land, grew vegetables or whatever and she was able to take care of the children because her husband was in the United States.

SIGRIST: To transcend these hardships.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Tell me a little bit about what you know of the process of your mother and father getting ready to leave. Now, your father came on a different ship.

HENTELL: Yes.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about all of that.

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HENTELL: Well, they were supposed to—I don't know why they weren't supposed to come together, but they were supposed to come with their mother and the younger sister, Edith, and younger brother, Jacob and my brother, and their mother died. Now, my father and his brother, I understand came on another ship. I wasn't told the name of the ship, but I understand my father, when they arrived, my father had pinkeye or I forget what they call it. The kids get it in school, and he was sent back until it cleared up and then he came out.

SIGRIST: How—how—did he go before your mother? I mean what kind of—

HENTELL: He came after.

SIGRIST: He came after your mother.

HENTELL: On another ship, yeah.

SIGRIST: What do you know about what your mother had to go through to get ready to leave? If anything.

HENTELL: I don't know. I really don't know—

SIGRIST: She didn't ever talk about that process?

HENTELL: No.

SIGRIST: Do you know what port she left from?

HENTELL: Yes, from at that time it was called Danzig and now it's Gandansk. And the ship partway out broke down and had to go back to that port for repairs and due to that delay, I was born on the ship three days out from—from the United States.

SIGRIST: So they picked up the Samland in Danzig.

HENTELL: The Samland, yeah.

SIGRIST: And what did your mother ever tell you later on about being on the ship and maybe how she felt about being on the ship? Before—before you were born, you know.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Her thoughts about being on the ship.

HENTELL: Well, mostly about her regret at not being able to bring their mother out with them.

SIGRIST: Your cousin Lillian is dying to say something.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Say it audibly so the microphone will pick it up.

ROBINSON: Well, what I want to—

SIGRIST: In fact, why don't you scoot your chair over here.

ROBINSON: I want to retrogress a little bit because I know my father helped financially to bring them over.

HENTELL: Yeah. Yeah, but we didn't get—

ROBINSON: When they arrived, the youngest sister—the youngest sister was heartbroken because her sweetheart had to be left behind because he didn't have the money and the family, my parents, who were here earlier, sooner, had they known, they would have scared up enough money to bring him, too. So it was a very sad thing that she had to come without her sweetheart. That's about it.

SIGRIST: All right.

ROBINSON: You know, again, family helped family and that's the way it went.

SIGRIST: Right.

ROBINSON: And our mothers are sisters. Were sisters.

SIGRIST: The—do you know how long the ship took to get to the United States?

HENTELL: Seventeen days.

SIGRIST: Seventeen days.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever talk about—obviously, she was very pregnant before she got on the ship.

HENTELL: Yes.

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SIGRIST: Did she ever talk about—about being pregnant with you and what—if there had been any kind of examinations before she got on the ship or—

HENTELL: No, she never mentioned anything like that. No, I do know—

SIGRIST: Women didn't really talk about that kind of thing.

HENTELL: Well, yeah, but—and I don't think she—I'm sure she didn't expect me to be born on the ship. She thought by—she carried small, from what I understand, and then they had years of deprivation and not the proper food. It took some time. Because of World War I, they were without the most ordinary foods.

SIGRIST: By carrying small, I should say for the sake of the tape, you mean that she just didn't her pregnancy quote so prominently.

HENTELL: Correct, or they may have sent her back. From what she told me, if they knew a woman was expecting within a very short time, they sent her back.

SIGRIST: But somehow mom got on the ship.

HENTELL: She got on. Poor thing, it must have been the seasickness.

SIGRIST: Did she ever describe—so you know that she was sick on the ship? What did your mother relate to you about that voyage?

HENTELL: Well, you know, she didn't—really didn't mention much except that her brother and sister had to run after my—my older brother, who was eighteen months at the time, and had to care for him because she couldn't.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever tell you anything specific about delivering you, what that experience was like on the ship?

HENTELL: No. No, she didn't.

SIGRIST: Do you know—do you know who assisted at the birth, if anyone?

HENTELL: I think a ship's doctor. I'm not sure if there was a ship's doctor aboard.

ROBINSON: The clothing.

HENTELL: Yeah, but—well, that's—after I was born, someone crocheted a cap for me and—

SIGRIST: Someone on the ship?

HENTELL: Yeah, someone crocheted a cap for me when evidently they announced the birth, and someone made a little gown sort of three-quarter sleeves out of a muslin or some crude fabric, and it had red trim with—made from red cotton.

SIGRIST: Is this perhaps a reflection of the fact that your mother didn't expect to give birth on the ship? She didn't bring anything along.

HENTELL: I believe so. She—she was not prepared at all. Yeah.

SIGRIST: That's a great story.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: So you were born three days out of New York. Do you know what time you were born on June 14<sup>th</sup>?

HENTELL: I—I—I don't recall it. All I have is a letter from the White Star Line stating I was born on the ship. I don't recall if there was a time mentioned.

SIGRIST: Was there any discussion—and you would only know this from later on—of your nationality at that time when you were born, being on a ship?

HENTELL: There wasn't. I do go to the immigration to find out if I was considered a citizen, since it flew the American flag. At that time, I was told by one of the women at the counter that I wasn't considered a citizen. I don't know if that was so or not, but I decided to take out my own derivative papers.

SIGRIST: This is later on, of course.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me what happened to your mom and you, as an infant, when the ship came into New York.

HENTELL: Well, they hospitalized her here at—on Ellis Island, and my cousin Lillian, who's father, Max Shapiro, told me not too many years ago that he had a very difficult time trying to get her out.

SIGRIST: Did he ever talk about what he went through to get her out? What he had to—

HENTELL: I don't know what the process was, but evidently either they didn't release her because my father hadn't come yet, or because they didn't feel she was well enough to be released.

SIGRIST: Let me ask your cousin Lillian, did your father ever talk about just what the process was?

ROBINSON: I'm afraid not. Possibly he did, but I don't recall.

SIGRIST: Not that you remember. When she—what did your mother ever tell you about that time when she was hospitalized here?

HENTELL: She never mentioned that, that I recall. She—I knew she had been hospitalized, but I thought that was part of the procedure, if you had a child or an illness, so I never questioned it any further.

SIGRIST: Do you—do you have any idea—of course, knowing your mother's personality, do you have—could you wager a guess as to what was running through her mind at this time?

HENTELL: She was very—I have a feeling she was terrified. She was timid. They were used to being ordered around. They were used to being intimidated and so I have a feeling that she was probably fearful.

SIGRIST: Because your father hasn't come over yet.

HENTELL: Right.

SIGRIST: He came after.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: So she's, you know, quite by herself, except that she's got siblings with her. How long, do you know—do you know how long her detention here was?

HENTELL: I—no, I don't really recall.

SIGRIST: Not sure. What happened when they released her? What—

HENTELL: Well, my cousin's father—

SIGRIST: This is Max.

HENTELL: Max, I—I don't remember if he had found a place for them or they stayed with my mother's father, and—and until they took an apartment of their own.

SIGRIST: How much longer did your mother have to wait before your father came over?

HENTELL: I—I really don't know. I don't think it was months or I don't think it was that long a period of time.

SIGRIST: Soon after.

HENTELL: Yeah. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Let me ask you—now, let's zip a few years ahead.

HENTELL: All right.

SIGRIST: Tell me what it was like, because you grew up really as an American. You know, you went to an American school. Tell me what it was like to live in a house with immigrant parents. Tell me some of the—some of the advantages and the disadvantages of that situation for you, as an Americanized child?

HENTELL: Well, first of all, I'll say I always found it embarrassing when people asked, I had to tell people where I was born. I'd say the Atlantic Ocean or at sea, and then I got all the questions involved. And—[Chuckles]—I found that very difficult as a child, and the advantage—well, my parents wanted to learn English and read English and in fact, I used to walk my mother to the other side of town to night school so she could learn English. So many of the immigrants, I must say, wanted to learn, wanted to become part of the country. They wanted to—they learned to read and they learned to speak English.

SIGRIST: Can you talk a little bit about your mother learning English, and—and—and what you remember about that process?

HENTELL: Well, the most difficult people would—difficult part is for people who speak Russian or Polish is to say the T-Hs. This. They—she would say "Dis" and they'd ask us to correct her, and she finally got the hang of it, and then in her later years before she passed away, she took her citizenship test and the interesting thing is the judge, before whom she appeared, his father had come from their same small hometown. So she passed the test and then we had a nice party to celebrate.

SIGRIST: [Chuckles] That's a great story. Tell me about—tell me about some of the old world customs, if there were any that your parents maintained in your home. What were some of the things that they did in America that they had done in Russia?

HENTELL: Well, some of the food preparations, naturally.

SIGRIST: Like what, specifically?

HENTELL: Well, being—

ROBINSON: Borscht.

HENTELL: Well, borscht. Beet borscht, cabbage borscht, potato pancakes, herrings. In fact, when company came, they'd set out a bowl of boiled potatoes and herring and we as youngsters wouldn't—didn't care for that, but now that I can eat it, I can't. [Laughs]

SIGRIST: What about—

HENTELL: But—yeah.

SIGRIST: What about like on holiday celebrations? Were there ways that they would celebrate the holidays here in the United States that were similar to how they would have celebrated them in Russia? And pick a holiday and just sort of describe it.

HENTELL: Well, they were the Jewish holidays. We're of Jewish extraction and we would have—we'd go to temple. We'd dress up. We had holidays meals, certain things that more or less were more difficult to make during most of the year that were prepared specifically for the holiday meals.

ROBINSON: Like honey cakes.

HENTELL: Yeah, the honey cake, taiglach.

SIGRIST: Taiglach, what's that?

HENTELL: Taiglach.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, first of all?

HENTELL: T-A-I-G-L-A-C-H. That's dough that you roll very long and you cut it in small pieces, or you could pull the pieces apart, and you dropped them in a spicy honey mixture and then you removed them and generally

you'd pile them in clusters, and they're a little bit sticky, chewy and sweet.

ROBINSON: And you added a lot of almonds.

HENTELL: Yeah, and you can add almonds—

ROBINSON: [unclear] almonds.

HENTELL: Yeah, nuts or sometimes—

SIGRIST: Was this for a special occasion?

HENTELL: During the holidays. Sponge cake and the—well, there was always chicken soup and matzo balls.

SIGRIST: And these were things that they probably carried over—

HENTELL: Yeah, chopped liver and things of that sort that they brought from Russia.

SIGRIST: What about how your parents looked? Their physical appearance. Was there a difference in America—to other Americans how they looked, how they dressed, how they wore their hair or—

HENTELL: Well, my mother had long hair and she used to wear it in a bun, but as time went by and she more or less modernized and cut her hair. Yeah. And well, my father, I remember him as a youngster. On Sundays he'd be home and he'd wear these, they called them pangee. [PH] It was sort of a golden silk shirt and in those days, they didn't cut sleeves to measure, so that they had to wear the rubber bands to hold them up. Yeah.

SIGRIST: What work did your father do in the United States?

HENTELL: Well—

SIGRIST: Right when they first got here.

HENTELL: You know, I'm not quite sure. He was a jack of all trades. He really—of course, he didn't really—wasn't really interested in following his father's footsteps as a pharmacist, and then the type of pharmacist there might not have made it in the United States. So he did a number of things. He had a—he delivered ice. He'd carry—he was very strong. He'd—he was about five seven, and he'd carry ice up several stories on his back.

ROBINSON: He was tall.

HENTELL: No, they were short.

ROBINSON: [unclear]

HENTELL: And he delivered coal. He had a horse and wagon and delivered—sold fruit and vegetables. Sometimes he'd let us hold the reins. The barn at that time—stables were in the city at that time.

SIGRIST: The city of New York?

HENTELL: No, in Passaic.

SIGRIST: Oh, in Passaic. That's where you went to was Passaic.

HENTELL: Yeah, Passaic.

ROBINSON: [Whispers]

HENTELL: And let's see. He—well, then when Prohibition set in, he had a little store was combination candy store and—and he made his own—he got the bootleg whiskey and he made his own whiskey and we all assisted in making—he made beer in big kegs that stood in our kitchen, and we'd all pitch in and clean out the bottles and siphon the beer into the bottles and all that sort of thing. And then he—he had a regular bar, but across from the Montauk Theater in Passaic.

SIGRIST: A regular bar, you said?

HENTELL: Yeah, this was more sort of a candy store, sold cigarettes, snuff, ice cream, a little of everything, and that after that, the banks closed and he was told to take his money out by—by a number of people, and he didn't and so that—he had to close the bar. He went broke, and he sold fruit and vegetables off a truck and then my uncle Max Shapiro, taught him—who was a paint and wallpaper contractor, who had a business in Bloomfield, New Jersey, and a store, and a very fine clientele. So my father got started as a painter and from then he retained that as his trade.

SIGRIST: Your father seems like he was a very flexible person. You know, sort of willing to do what he had to do—

HENTELL: Well, that's it. There were five of us. Five of us by then. I have a sister fourteen months younger. Her name is Rose, and a brother,

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Joseph, and the youngest is a sister, Estelle. So with five children, he had to do something to make a living. Yeah.

SIGRIST: ere there any ways that—zip you a little farther ahead, like when you were in high school and junior high school.

HENTELL: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Were there any ways that your parents, the fact that they probably spoke with accents or, you know, was that ever a concern to you, as you—when you were a young woman?

HENTELL: Not at all because my mother did not have the heavy Russian accent. She had a very, very, very slight accent, and—and she wanted to try to speak correctly. And my father, his family was financially better off because the father was a pharmacist, like the doctor in the village, so they were able to pay for his education. You had to buy your education then, and so no, it wasn't embarrassing at all.

SIGRIST: What—what ways now do you—do you feel those European roots? What's inside of you now that—that—that harkens back to that way of life of your parents in Europe?

HENTELL: Well, frankly, I don't think any of it did. I don't think any of it did because it was a very hard life and there was a lot of persecution and it wasn't altogether like the movie Fiddler on the Roof.

END OF SIDE A  
BEGIN SIDE B

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever teach in—in Russian or did they speak Yiddish, too?

HENTELL: Well, they spoke Yiddish and Russian, Polish and German because they were in that area.

SIGRIST: Whoever was occupying at the time, during the First World War.

HENTELL: Right. Right, so if they didn't want us to understand, they would speak in Russian or Polish.

ROBINSON: [unclear]

SIGRIST: That's all right. Lillian Robinson.

ROBINSON: Yeah, thank you. My mother did speak Yiddish a great deal at home. Sometimes, although she spoke English. She went to night school. She had a job here in a department store labeling dresses. You know, putting the labels on dresses, and she wrote and read and spoke English. But she was—

HENTELL: She was—

ROBINSON: You know, speech was in Yiddish, too.

HENTELL: Yeah.

ROBINSON: And once in awhile, she would read the equivalent of “My True Story,” from the Yiddish paper to me and she’d translate anything I didn’t understand. Some interesting story. But—

HENTELL: Our mothers—

ROBINSON: She was the eldest. My mother was the eldest sister.

HENTELL: Yeah. She was—

ROBINSON: They were the first to come here.

HENTELL: She also was educated in Hebrew. She was--

ROBINSON: Yeah, and she spoke German.

HENTELL: Yeah.

ROBINSON: Polish fluently.

HENTELL: The women in the family weren’t—didn’t have much education, but they were very intelligent women.

SIGRIST: I was—in fact, my next question to you was going to—and I can ask this either—of either Lillian or Lillian. Is there a song or a nursery rhyme or a lullaby or something that your mother taught you or sang to you in one of her languages that you still remember that you could do for us on tape?

HENTELL: Well, no. Unfortunately, when we went for a ride, she would sing us some—

ROBINSON: [unclear]

SIGRIST: Wait, don't talk at the same time, please.

HENTELL: She would sing some of the songs that I guess they were in Yiddish or Russian, but I don't recall her singing—

SIGRIST: Is there one of those songs that perhaps even both of you know that you could sing on tape for us.

HENTELL: She might know.

ROBINSON: [unclear – song title in foreign language]

HENTELL: Yeah, I—we didn't—

ROBINSON: [unclear]

HENTELL: Really, well, we don't.

ROBINSON: [unclear]

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: The youngest.

ROBINSON: You want to hear it?

SIGRIST: Yeah, but you got to get closer to the microphone.

ROBINSON: It has a number of verses.

SIGRIST: Well, one first will be fine.

ROBINSON: Oh, one verse? Oh, [unclear].

SIGRIST: But you've got to get closer to the microphone.

ROBINSON: But it tells a story. So you're not going to get the whole story.

SIGRIST: Well, no.

ROBINSON: Let's see. I got to find the key.

SIGRIST: This is Lillian Robinson, Mrs. Hentell's cousin. And do you know it? Can you sing along?

HENTELL: No, I don't—

ROBINSON: Maybe the [unclear].

HENTELL: No, I don't know any of them.

ROBINSON: [sings in foreign language]

SIGRIST: Thank you.

HENTELL: That means "happy you'll be."

ROBINSON: Be happy, yeah.

SIGRIST: And this is a narrative song. There's actually a story—

ROBINSON: Yeah, it's about a farmer and his girlfriend.

HENTELL: Now, that sounds—the song sounds familiar, but we never learned any in Yiddish or Russian.

SIGRIST: But your mother—but your mother did actually sing some of these old songs?

HENTELL: Yeah.

ROBINSON: She did sing.

SIGRIST: At times.

HENTELL: Yeah. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did your parents ever want to go back, for any reason?

HENTELL: Never. They had nothing but bitter memories. My—my—I think during World War II, or after, my father's mother had passed away and—and his—his father, I don't know if he was living during World War II, either. But my father had a younger sister whose name was Rose, and a brother named Lazur and they both had children and all we could find out is that they weren't—that they were killed. Those families were killed during some sort of fighting. They weren't in concentration camps.

SIGRIST: Did—did you ever go back?

HENTELL: No. I often thought of it, but I don't even know if the town is still there. It was a small town called Yanniva, [PH] and there is an Yanov on the map, but I'm not sure if that's the same town.

SIGRIST: It's interesting because I'm wondering if you went to school, when you were in school in America, how many other immigrant families were there? I mean, how many other children were you in your situation of having—of either born in this country, or you know, for the most part being American, but having solidly immigrant parents? Were you conscious of that at that time?

HENTELL: Well—well, me—Passaic was an ethnic city. It had its—it had a good size Jewish population. There was an Italian population. There was—well, when you walked down the street, you know they love opera and I recall passing the shoemaker's shop and he always had opera going. And I mean you knew it was ethnic because if you lived in an apartment house like we did, you could smell the—get the various aromas of the different types of cooking. There was a Russian area, Polish area. It was—it was an immigrant city at the time, and I must say, some—many of the immigrant children made their mark in the world. Some became very well known in the movie industry and so on.

SIGRIST: Did your parents experience any kind of prejudice of some sort in Passaic in the 1920s and '30s.

HENTELL: I never—I never heard of any. Never heard of any.

SIGRIST: They never discussed that.

HENTELL: No, I think all those refugees were so happy to be there that—I should say immigrants, that—that—and they were busy raising their children and trying to adjust to a new way of life.

SIGRIST: Yes, other Lillian?

ROBINSON: I just—I have to say that after graduating high school, there still were quotas, which I experienced. There were many times when there was no reason why I could not get some job that I applied for. However, there were those quotas and they did have the religious question on the applications at that time, and there were companies that were known for not hiring Jewish people and possibly other ethnic groups.

HENTELL: Yeah, that's—yeah.

SIGRIST: Still existed—we're probably talking about the 1940s at this point, right?

ROBINSON: Yes.

HENTELL: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah. In fact, I'd like to ask Cousin Lillian, Lillian Robinson, I'd like you to discuss a little bit about your family's relationship, the Max Shapiro family—

ROBINSON: Oh.

SIGRIST: With—with—

ROBINSON: With her family.

SIGRIST: With—yes, Lillian Hentell's family.

ROBINSON: Well, my father was—came prior to, so far as I know, any of the—their—

SIGRIST: More—no, what I'm looking for is actual like what did you guys do together and how did you—how did you spend time together, if you did? That kind of thing.

ROBINSON: Prior to their moving to California.

SIGRIST: Well, I'm talking about when you were kids.

ROBINSON: Yeah, we lived in the next town.

SIGRIST: You know, in the '20s and '30s. Uh-huh.

ROBINSON: We moved—we lived in Bloomfield. They lived in Passaic.

HENTELL: And Fanny lived in Passaic.

ROBINSON: Yes.

HENTELL: [unclear]

ROBINSON: My family, my mother was the only sister who lived outside of Passaic, and when I was—we used to come visiting and out came the herring and the potatoes, and we had nice times. When I was old enough to get on a bus, I would go and visit them because they had a much better social life. The two sisters were very close together and they had an older brother and there was a much better social life there than

it was in Bloomfield, for me. So I'd get on the bus and go back and forth and we were a little better of financially, so I would have a little more money. And we would go to the movies on Saturday and we'd stop for some kosher hotdogs on the way home, and I usually footed the bill because I was in a little better financial situation. And we were very close until when we were about fourteen, I was about to enter high school.

HENTELL: Went to California.

ROBINSON: When you went to California.

HENTELL: I was seventeen, yeah

ROBINSON: You were seventeen? Thought we were a little—so we were close up until that time.

SIGRIST: So that changed. That changed the whole family structure.

ROBINSON: Yeah.

HENTELL: Yeah.

ROBINSON: But of course we've been very close. Even now our phone bills are astronomical.

HENTELL: [Chuckles]

SIGRIST: Where—and I'll ask both of you this question. Let me start with Mrs. Hentell first. Were social organizations at all important to your parents?

HENTELL: Uh, papa belonged to something, but I can't think of it offhand. Not terribly. Not terrible—I don't think—I don't know that—they were so busy raising their family, and we had a car. We always had a car or a horse and wagon, so we weren't that restricted, but no, they just lived a—

SIGRIST: That wasn't part of their social lives.

HENTELL: Simple family—no. No.

ROBINSON: My father had an expensive—

SIGRIST: Mrs. Robinson, what about your parents?

ROBINSON: Religious education in Russia. When he came here, he had a belly full. We all had religious training. He was not really—he came to whatever functions there were that we were engaged in. He was—while not religious, he used to say “I made a pact with the man upstairs. I won’t bother him, and he won’t bother me,” but you will not—would not find a more ethical man in this entire world.

SIGRIST: But what about social organizations.

ROBINSON: But a social—no.

SIGRIST: You know, or political organizations.

ROBINSON: No.

HENTELL: I think it was the Oddfellows my father belonged to.

SIGRIST: Yeah, well, that’s the sort of thing that I’m looking for.

HENTELL: Yeah.

ROBINSON: No, my father didn’t—

HENTELL: I think it was the Oddfellows. It was—but they didn’t go to social functions or dances or anything of that sort.

SIGRIST: I see.

HENTELL: I think he was a member.

SIGRIST: Well, I think that’s probably good. This has been—it’s wonderful having two—two different types--

ROBINSON: I wanted to tell you a little—if you want to turn that off.

SIGRIST: Well, is this a story about—

ROBINSON: It’s a—no. It’s about my father.

SIGRIST: Well, let me—let me just sign off here and then we can—

ROBINSON: All right.

SIGRIST: Talk. I’ve been talking with Lillian Hentell and her cousin, Lillian Robinson, and Mrs. Hentell has the unique distinction of having been born on a ship. Even though it caused you some pain when you were

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a kid, explaining it to people. [Laughing] Anyway, ladies, thank you very much. This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Lillian Hentell and Lillian Robinson on Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1996 up here in the Oral History Studio. Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW