

EI-872

HELEN VAHALY BAKANCHOS

BIRTHDATE: AUGUST 17, 1909

INTERVIEW DATE: MAY 1, 1997

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 87

RUNNING TIME: 52:18

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

INTERVIEW LOCATION: FRANKLIN, NEW JERSEY

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

HUNGARY, 1921

AGE: 11

SHIP: THE BRITANNIA

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

LEVINE: Now, I'll intro—[tape off/on] today is May 1st, 1997 and I'm here in Franklin, New Jersey at the home of Helen Bakona—

BAKANCHOS: Bakanchos.

HELLER: Bakanchos.

LEVINE: Bakanchos.

HELLER: Right.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Bakanchos. And you were born Helen Vahaly?

BAKANCHOS: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And you came to this country in 1921 when you were 11 years of age. Right? On the Britannia.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And I also want to mention Viola Heller—

HELLER: Yes.

LEVINE: —who is Mrs. Bakanchos' daughter—

BAKANCHOS: Daughter.

LEVINE: —is also here with us—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, daughter.

LEVINE: —for this interview.

HELLER: Okay.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, if you would give your birth date and where you were born.

BAKANCHOS: I was born in Hungary.

LEVINE: Do you remember the town?

BAKANCHOS: [several words unclear].

LEVINE: Oh, boy.

HELLER: That's here.

LEVINE: We've got that written out?

HELLER: That's here, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay.

HELLER: Okay.

LEVINE: And—and what about—

HELLER: The date.

LEVINE: —your birth date?

HELLER: Your birthday?

BAKANCHOS: It—it says over there [unclear] 1910 but on my birth certificate is dollar—[chuckles] dollar—19—

HELLER: '09.

BAKANCHOS: 1909.

HELLER: Right, yeah.

LEVINE: 1909? And what date was it? What day?

BAKANCHOS: August—

HELLER: August 17th.

LEVINE: August 17th.

BAKANCHOS: August 17.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, did you live in the same town in Hungary—

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: —up until you were 11?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, until I—yeah, the same town.

LEVINE: You stayed there until—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: —you left for the United States?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, because my father come to this country.

LEVINE: Okay. When did your father come?

BAKANCHOS: I don't know.

LEVINE: Do you remember how old you were when he came to this country?

BAKANCHOS: No, I don't know.

LEVINE: Hmm, okay.

BAKANCHOS: I don't know that.

LEVINE: Did you remember him? When you came here, did you remember your father?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I've got a picture of him.

LEVINE: But did—did you remember him, from being a little girl in Hungary?

BAKANCHOS: No, I don't.

LEVINE: No.

BAKANCHOS: I don't remember him, see, because he come h—here early. I don't know wh—when.

LEVINE: Okay.

BAKANCHOS: And he was working in a coal mine and, from there, send a letter—

LEVINE: [unclear]

BAKANCHOS: —to my mother—

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: —and asked him if she want to come to this country. So my mother said she—she want to come.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What was your father's name?

BAKANCHOS: Peter Vahaly.

LEVINE: Okay. And your mother's name?

BAKANCHOS: Elizabeth Toth.

LEVINE: That was her maiden name? Uh-hmm, right. And so that's what makes you the sister-in-law to the Mrs. Toth who has also been interviewed with us—

BAKANCHOS: [unclear] Toth.

LEVINE: —for this Ellis Island collection. Okay. Now—

HELLER: Oh—

LEVINE: —in Hungary—

HELLER: Not really.

LEVINE: No?

HELLER: That's no relation.

BAKANCHOS: What?

LEVINE: Oh, that's—

HELLER: Your—Grandma, Mrs. Elizabeth Toth was Grandma, your mother.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: That's no relation to [unclear] mama.

BAKANCHOS: No.

HELLER: That's no relation to Mrs. Laslow [PH] Toth.

LEVINE: Okay. So your mother's maiden name—

HELLER: It just happens to be the Toth name.

LEVINE: —was the same.

BAKANCHOS: Was Toth. So Toth—

LEVINE: But it was really that you married—the Mrs. Toth who's also interviewed, you married her brother.

HELLER: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: Because she was a Bakanchos [PH] before she was a Toth, Mrs.— Mrs. Toth. Eleanor—

LEVINE: Uh-huh, Eleanor.

HELLER: Eleanor Toth.

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

LEVINE: Yeah?

HELLER: Okay. She was a Bakanchos before she became a Toth.

LEVINE: That was her maiden name.

HELLER: That's correct.

LEVINE: Okay. [chuckles]

HELLER: All right?

LEVINE: Okay. [laughter] We got that straight. Good.

HELLER: Okay.

LEVINE: Now, your father, was he working in the mines in Hungary too?

BAKANCHOS: No, he was a—a conductor on the train.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Then he came here. Did he come to Franklin?

BAKANCHOS: No, he went to I don't know where, coal mine someplace.

LEVINE: I see.

BAKANCHOS: And [clears throat] we come there and then my mother didn't like it so we went back to Europe.

LEVINE: Really?

BAKANCHOS: Didn't stay here too long.

LEVINE: About how long did you stay?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I don't know. I was small. I don't know how long we stayed but my mother went back. And [clears throat]—

LEVINE: D—this 1921 date, is that the second time you came back or is that the first time that you came?

BAKANCHOS: No, that's the second time come.

LEVINE: The second. I see.

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

BAKANCHOS: Then my father come here to Franklin and then he went to work in the mine.

LEVINE: I see. The zinc mine?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, over here.

LEVINE: I see.

BAKANCHOS: Over here.

LEVINE: Now, did he have friends and relatives in Franklin at that time that—you know, that he knew to come to Franklin and to settle here?

BAKANCHOS: N—well, he must—he—

HELLER: [unclear] here.

BAKANCHOS: He must have because they rented the house out, like company house. Zinc company owned these houses.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: These little—little houses. And all the w—worker down in mine, they lived over here in the—the families.

HELLER: But who was Mr. Badner [PH]?

BAKANCHOS: Mr. Badner?

HELLER: Wasn't—wasn't Grandpa friends with Mr. Badner?

BAKANCHOS: Well, Mr. Badner and Kenneth's mama—

HELLER: Mrs. Toth.

BAKANCHOS: They—well, Mrs. Badner, there's—Kenneth's mama's mother. They were sisters.

HELLER: Oh, okay. Mrs. Toth's sister and Mrs. Badner were sisters. Now, the Badners are also Hungarian people who have passed away.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, that's—

HELLER: But—

BAKANCHOS: —her relation.

HELLER: —that was Mrs. Toth's relation.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: But that—Grandpa knew—knew them.

BAKANCHOS: My father?

HELLER: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: No.

HELLER: Oh, no?

BAKANCHOS: No.

HELLER: Okay.

BAKANCHOS: [unclear], no—

HELLER: I'll stay out of it. You—you go.

LEVINE: Okay. [chuckles]

HELLER: You tell the story.

LEVINE: Okay. So he came here to Franklin the second time.

BAKANCHOS: Second time.

LEVINE: Second time. And that's—

BAKANCHOS: He worked in a mine.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see. Now, did you have sisters and brothers—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah. I got—

LEVINE: —when you—when you came—

BAKANCHOS: I got—

LEVINE: —that were born in Europe?

BAKANCHOS: Well—

HELLER: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: Some [unclear]—

HELLER: Uh-hmm. There's Elizabeth, who is her sister. This is my grandmother and that's—

BAKANCHOS: That's my brother.

HELLER: No. This is Aunt Betty.

BAKANCHOS: Oh, that's Aunt—the other one.

HELLER: She's got a ribbon in her hair.

BAKANCHOS: The other one is—

HELLER: That's my mother's sister, Betty, Elizabeth. And that's my mother's mother. And this was my mother's brother, Peter Vahaly, who has passed away. He's deceased now. But Mrs.—well, her name is Fuller now—she is still alive and she's in the next town.

LEVINE: Really?

HELLER: She's in Hamburg.

LEVINE: Oh, well, maybe—

HELLER: She's—yeah.

LEVINE: —talk with her. Now, where is your mother?

BAKANCHOS: I don—I don't think she remembers—

LEVINE: Much?

BAKANCHOS: She don't remember much.

HELLER: [unclear], no.

LEVINE: Well, now, where's your mother's picture?

HELLER: That's in here.

BAKANCHOS: Big bow on my head.

HELLER: Oh, is this you then?

LEVINE: Oh, then that must be you.

HELLER: Is this you? No, this is Aunt Betty. Here's a pic—[unclear].

BAKANCHOS: I got a pict—

HELLER: Wait—

BAKANCHOS: That's my separate—that's my—

HELLER: Oh, that's a—

LEVINE: Oh, you have a separate one?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: Oh, okay.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, that's a—

HELLER: Oh, here. This was my mother.

LEVINE: Oh, yeah. So you were older. So your mother—

HELLER: Yeah.

LEVINE: —and your younger sister were taken in one photograph.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And you would have your own—

HELLER: Yeah, with Peter.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HELLER: Just the brother.

LEVINE: Oh, that's beautiful.

HELLER: And this is my mother.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Okay. So when you came to Franklin then, you were 11.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: But now, what do you remember? Did you—when you went back, did you stay in Hungary for a period of time or did you just stay—

BAKANCHOS: Well, I stayed there, I don't know how long, but that's when they—1921, we come—come to this country.

LEVINE: What—what memories do you have of Hungary? Do you remember being there?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, sure. I remember where—

LEVINE: Do you remember? Did you have grandparents there?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, I had grandparents and [clears throat] every Sunday we had—they had a wine—winery there.

HELLER: Winery.

BAKANCHOS: You know, they—they raised the grapes—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: —and fruit—fruit in there, over there. And every Sunday, with my grandmother, we went out there and by the time we got back to our place or her place, we picked a br—basket full of fruit because it all fall on the road.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: So we—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: We picked it. We could pick it up.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HELLER: Yeah.

LEVINE: What was your grandmother like? What do you remember about her?

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

BAKANCHOS: Oh, I—she used to be good. You know, we used together all over, went—went out on a field and we cut the weed and put them in a burlap bag and put 'em on our back.

LEVINE: And you helped her with it?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah. She helped me put the bag on my back and she had her—one for her too.

HELLER: And what'd you do with the weeds?

BAKANCHOS: Well, we took it home for the cows and horse—

HELLER: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: —and had chicken and—

HELLER: Okay.

BAKANCHOS: —ducks.

LEVINE: Did you have a grandfather? Do you remember him?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, grandfather too.

LEVINE: Yeah?

BAKANCHOS: And they had their fun.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did—

BAKANCHOS: One who come to this country but we never knew him, where we is.

LEVINE: I see. D—did your grandfather work in the fields too?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: They had horse, pig. You know, they had all kind of animals they raised.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about your mother's—was that your mother's or your father's—

BAKANCHOS: My mother's—

LEVINE: Your mother's. How—

BAKANCHOS: —mother. My mother's mother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: N—we never knew my father's. Never see them.

LEVINE: Yeah?

HELLER: And what did Gr—Grandma do? What—did she work or did she—
what did she do?

BAKANCHOS: In Europe?

HELLER: Yes.

BAKANCHOS: Well, she work on a field.

HELLER: Oh, okay. That's all.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, when you [clears throat]—when you were young, did
you go to school in Hungary?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, went—I don't know how much—how—how much grade.
Maybe three—three or four grade. That's all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And you spoke Hungarian?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that was all that you spoke.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Only when we come this country, then pick some up. But still, I
don't speak good.

LEVINE: You speak fine.

BAKANCHOS: [chuckles]

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

LEVINE: You speak fine. [chuckles] Now, how about aunts and uncles? Do you—did you have any of them—

BAKANCHOS: In Europe?

LEVINE: —in Hungary? Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: Y—yeah, I had, I don't know, about three or four.

LEVINE: Oh. Were you close to them? Did you see them?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you go places with them?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: They—yeah. We was close. We used to walk to their house. One uncle had 12 children and we used to go over there, you know, when we were kids, go over there and she made us to sit around the table, or not on the table, on the floor. And she made noodles with pachees [PH]. And we sit around the ta—all the kids and we was eating it, eating it. And when it had—didn't have too much in there, one of them spit in it. Then we left it there. We didn't [chuckles]—we didn't want to eat. [laughter]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And were you religious? Were you a religious family?

BAKANCHOS: Not—

LEVINE: In Hungary?

BAKANCHOS: Well, we—we used to go church.

LEVINE: Which church?

BAKANCHOS: Hungarian church.

LEVINE: It was a Catholic church?

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: No.

BAKANCHOS: This was a Presbyterian, I think.

LEVINE: Presbyterian.

BAKANCHOS: They had Hung—Catholic too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: And Presbyterian. They had Jew.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Jew—church.

LEVINE: Synagogues, uh-huh.

HELLER: My father was Catholic. She was Presbyterian.

LEVINE: I see.

BAKANCHOS: Hmm.

LEVINE: So what did you do for fun? Do you remember? Besides sitting around the—on the floor with your cousins and all, what kinds of things did you play? Or did you go swimming? Did you—

BAKANCHOS: N—

LEVINE: What kinds of things did you do?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, we used to go to the field but we had to go across a—a bruk—a brook. It was a big brook. And we had to—one time we was crossing it, a snake chased us, a big [chuckles] snake in the water. But after that, we didn't go over there because it was too far to go around. So we used to go across the brook. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. [chuckles] Uh-huh. Now, when you were in school there, was the school strict? Do you remember what school was like in Europe?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, they were strict. When you didn't do something, go to—they made you kneel on your—on the corn.

LEVINE: On the corn?

BAKANCHOS: On—corn under your knee.

HELLER: Corncobs.

LEVINE: Oh, my goodness!

BAKANCHOS: Or you had to put your fingers like this with a—with a p—that stick, used to hit you on your fingernail.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: When you was bad in school; you didn't do something good.
[chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, let's see. Where—you were the oldest child—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah,

LEVINE: —in the family. Then came Peter.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, Peter and then my sister.

LEVINE: Elizabeth.

BAKANCHOS: Betty.

LEVINE: Betty. Uh-huh. And were you particularly close to Peter or Betty? Were you—did you spend a lot of time with one of them or—

BAKANCHOS: Oh, yeah. Well, we was together all the time.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Then he got married when we come here later on.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: And my sister got married.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What other memories do you have of—of Hungary, of Europe?

BAKANCHOS: Well—

LEVINE: What other memories? When you think back to that time, what are the things you think about?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I—I feel it—I could remember the church I used to go to. It was up on a little hill. And when we went to Europe, when—what year?

HELLER: 1985. We went to see her goddaughter. She has a goddaughter over there.

BAKANCHOS: And we was walking around and they asked me do I remember the church? And I says, “Yeah, it’s up the hill there.” I remembered the church. I still do.

LEVINE: Did you go there then and see it?

HELLER: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. How do you think—how do you feel about that little town now, when you think back on being there—

BAKANCHOS: Well—

LEVINE: —early in your life?

BAKANCHOS: Used to like it there because—

LEVINE: You—you liked it?

BAKANCHOS: —it wasn’t too big town.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: There was a—a city there next—it was Nidacasa [PH].

LEVINE: A casa?

HELLER: Nidacasa.

BAKANCHOS: That’s a—

HELLER: That’s the name of this [unclear]—city.

BAKANCHOS: That’s where we used to take—used to take our food, you know, what we raised. Used to take it over there and then put ‘em out on a table and we used to sell them.

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

LEVINE: So that was like going to market.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, like a market.

LEVINE: And did you go—

BAKANCHOS: Well—

LEVINE: —to the market?

BAKANCHOS: Sometime. Sometime, I went.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Used—sometime, we walk it. Sometime, we went on a wagon with a horse or horse and wagon.

LEVINE: Could you describe the market? What was it like? The market? And what was market day like when you went there?

BAKANCHOS: Well, they had everything put out. And you'd walk around and if you want to buy what you want to buy.

LEVINE: Was it just food or did they have other things too?

BAKANCHOS: Well, they had ducks. They had chickens. They had everything.

HELLER: Animals. They had all different animals—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: —for sale.

BAKANCHOS: And they used to—they used to sell cows. They have two. Some, my mother's—one of the friend—they bought the cow and they sell him. They—

LEVINE: Buy and sell.

BAKANCHOS: —buy and sell.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Now, did you have livestock? Did your mother or family have—

BAKANCHOS: Well, we have cows—cow and horses and had pigs and chicken and duck.

LEVINE: Did you have any—did you have duties? Did you have to take care of some of that?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, sure. We had to go—go out in the field and, I told you, cut those—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: —stuff up. Oh, pick—cut it off and then bring it home and then chop it up and then mix it with corn or cracked corn or hominy feed or whatever and then feed the—

LEVINE: The animals.

BAKANCHOS: —ducks, animals.

LEVINE: Huh. Okay. And how about, like, the cows? Did you milk the cows or any of that kind of thing?

BAKANCHOS: No, I didn't milk no cows.

LEVINE: But did you get milk from the cow for the family?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, now, do you know why, after you went back to Hungary, why you then came back here again? Why your father decided that?

BAKANCHOS: I don't know. We—it was up to my mother. She want to come back.

LEVINE: Because she's the one that didn't like it where you were the first time.

BAKANCHOS: Well, we was in the coal mine.

LEVINE: Yeah. You think—

BAKANCHOS: So he didn't like it over there.

LEVINE: You think that was in Pennsylvania?

BAKANCHOS: Pittsburgh.

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

LEVINE: Pittsburgh, okay. So then your mother decided she wanted to come back.

BAKANCHOS: Then she—she decided to come back. But then later on she want to go back. She didn't like it here. Because she didn't talk English.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So it was hard for her, probably, [unclear]—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah. When she—we come, we used to take—take in wash, you know, and work for the Jews.

LEVINE: Here or over there?

BAKANCHOS: Over here.

LEVINE: Over here.

BAKANCHOS: Here. Over there, my grandmother was—oh, what they call her? Bartender for the Jews.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: They had a Jew store, you know, and they had the—they had the food. Oh, and then—then the other end was a bar. She worked in the bartender—

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Uh-huh. And were there a lot of Jewish people in your town?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, there was a lot of Jewish people.

LEVINE: Now, did people get along or was it, you know, kind of, they kept to each—themselves?

BAKANCHOS: No, they was—was—was nice. They get—got together. They had a church right across from her house.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay. Now, when you came back to Franklin did you go right to school? Did you continue in school or—

BAKANCHOS: I didn't go to school too much. I went to work.

LEVINE: What did you do when you came here? Well, you were only 11, though.

BAKANCHOS: Eleven years old. I was in—and—and I went to work, M—to Mr. Weiss [PH]. He had a department store.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: And—

LEVINE: Here in Franklin?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, here in Franklin.

LEVINE: Oh.

HELLER: But you didn't work in the store. You worked cleaning.

BAKANCHOS: I was upstairs. She had two children.

LEVINE: Oh, you—

BAKANCHOS: And I used to clean the—clean. Cleaning and then taking care of the children. The boy never want to go school. So the—I had to dress him and brush his teeth and take him to school. [chuckles]

LEVINE: And you were just a child yourself [unclear].

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So—

BAKANCHOS: When the—Mr. Weiss want to go to uptown to the ma—get the mail, he walked up [unclear]. I stayed in the store watching him till he come back because he wasn't too far.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah. So how long did you do that? How long did you work for Mr. Weiss?

BAKANCHOS: [sighs] Well, I don't know how long but I was working for Mr. Weiss. I—working for Mr. Gandel [PH]. I was for Dr. Wermess [PH].

LEVINE: Were you cleaning and taking care of children?

BAKANCHOS: No, just cleaning.

LEVINE: Just cleaning, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Just, oh—[unclear] Weiss had only two children. The other place, I didn't have—didn't have no children, just clean house.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, now, when you came over here, you re—do you remember going to the port where you got the ship? Do you remember leaving Hungary that second time when you came?

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: No? And do you remember the Britannia at all, the ship that you came on?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, I remember that. We was there on the ship and I remember they were—the baker there, they had baking bread, little breads. And the baker always used to give me a—a loaf of bread. And they used to—t—you know, have—serve dinners or suppers or—so we still have a big, long table. And everybody sit b—on a table and eat there.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: And when—I remember coming out. We went through a ice cycle or, you know, what—what do you call that?

LEVINE: There were icebergs on the water?

BAKANCHOS: Ice—yeah.

HELLER: Icebergs, oh.

BAKANCHOS: And that—that ship was cracking all over. They used to stop places and pick up animals. We was on the third—third—

HELLER: Steerage. She was in the steerage class—

BAKANCHOS: Then—

HELLER: —with the animals.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: And, well, we come on the third—

LEVINE: Third class.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, third class.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: And when they come here and went back, it sink.

HELLER: The Britannia sunk.

LEVINE: Really? Oh.

BAKANCHOS: Sunk the—was cracking—cracking all over.

LEVINE: So were people frightened when you were coming across?

BAKANCHOS: Well, they were f—everybody was afraid because it was cracking.

LEVINE: Hmm, yeah.

BAKANCHOS: [laughs]

LEVINE: I'd be afraid to. So—so now, did you meet your husband on that ship? On the Britannia?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Your husband to be. Well, you didn't know that then.

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: Yeah. What did—how did you meet him and do you remember about when you first met him, what it was like?

BAKANCHOS: Well, we didn't know each other on the ship. Only, I remember that the mother and my mother, they used to be friends. And his mother gave my mother some money on the ship to buy something on the—on—on it, because she had more money than my mother did.

LEVINE: Did they know each other from before?

BAKANCHOS: No, they never—only met—meet on the ship.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: And when we went out to the island, I remember that, that they want to buy shoes for my husband. But my hu—didn't have enough money and they couldn't buy the shoes. So he—they had to tie his bottom, the shoes up with a—a string. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Oh, the soles were falling off?

BAKANCHOS: The—the soles of the—yeah, had to tie it up.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: That's how he come out and then had to buy a new pair of shoes here.

LEVINE: Wow. Now, where were they selling the shoes?

BAKANCHOS: This—where was—Marseilles [PH].

LEVINE: Oh, Marseilles in—in France.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: In Marseilles. That's where we—

LEVINE: Before you got on the ship.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, we—we had to go to the town on the boat to—that's where they used to sell stuff.

LEVINE: I see. Now, [clears throat] did you have any examinations before you got on the ship?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, do you—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, they used to examine your eyes and, you know, everything. And they used to send you different places. They had a, like a barn—bar, like—like where they put the cows in, you know, the long, long thing and different place. And they put—one go this way and the other go that way. Then the doctor examined you.

LEVINE: And that was before you got on the ship.

BAKANCHOS: Over there too.

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: And—and over here too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay. And so do you remember when the sh—do you remember when the ship came into the New York harbor? Do you remember that at all?

BAKANCHOS: I don't—

LEVINE: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty or—

BAKANCHOS: N—no, no.

LEVINE: —New York or any of that?

BAKANCHOS: I don't remember that.

LEVINE: Because—

BAKANCHOS: But—but I know that we went in a big building.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: A lot of people was just sitting around there.

LEVINE: Right. And do you remember anything about that?

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: The examinations you got in that building?

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, so then you came to—did somebody pick you up or how did you get from, let's say, Ellis Island to Franklin? Do you remember that?

BAKANCHOS: My—my br—my father come.

LEVINE: Oh, that's right.

BAKANCHOS: My father come and we—I remember I come on a train. I don't know into Ellis Island or Boston or I don't know where—where it—she come to pick us up.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: And we come on a train and then we used to see the light. We didn't see that in Europe, didn't have lights like here. And we used to get a kick out of that, watching the lights, coming home on a train.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And let's see. So y—your father—now, did you remember your father? Like, when you—did you recognize him, that that was—that man—

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: —was your father?

BAKANCHOS: No, I didn't recognize him.

LEVINE: Was it—was it strange being with your father after you—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah? Yeah. And so then you came to Franklin and did—did your father have a—an apartment or a house or wh—where was he living?

BAKANCHOS: Yes.

LEVINE: Where did you go?

BAKANCHOS: He—he had a house on Sterling Street. That house is my brother's house. And now it's my brother—wife's house. That—that's where we stayed on the—and then later on I got married and we bought this house.

LEVINE: I see. Do you remember that first day and that first night when you first got to this country, wh—what it was that, besides the lights that—that you remember seeing for the first time?

BAKANCHOS: Well, everything was strange because we never see things like that.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And did your father have furniture and everything in the house on Sterling Street?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Then my—then on Sterling Street, then my mother start to keep boarders.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: Because no job. Didn't have a job. So she keep boarders.

LEVINE: And did you know—did—did your mother and father know these boarders or they—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: —just were strangers?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, they used to work in the same place with my father with—

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: —on the mine.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And then you—how did you get reacquainted with—with the man who became your husband? When did you meet him again after you met him on the ship?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, I don't know.

LEVINE: Did he work in the mine?

BAKANCHOS: No.

LEVINE: No.

BAKANCHOS: He—he was working in the—oh, he worked all over as a—a boy.

LEVINE: He had come at the same time—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: —and—as you?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And—and—

BAKANCHOS: They come here before we did.

LEVINE: Now, was he your age or was he older or—

BAKANCHOS: No, he was older. Three years. Three years, I think. He was older.

LEVINE: So he had worked at different jobs.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, he worked [clears throat] in Sec—Sec—Secaucus or what—Secaucus?

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: He was a ambulance driver.

LEVINE: Hmm. And then how did you happen to meet him again?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I used to go—h—his mother used to be sick and he was—she was in the hospital. And [clears throat] she used to tell him that he should marry me. He says, “You—you marry her,” and that but he—he then just went away to Sec—Secaucus or [chuckles] what do you call it?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: And he worked as a ambulance driver there.

LEVINE: Well, how—

BAKANCHOS: Then, later on, he—he come back to your—this place, Franklin. And he used to write to me. That’s how we meet.

LEVINE: I see.

BAKANCHOS: I still got his letters.

LEVINE: Oh. Huh. Now, how was that you were visiting his mother, who was sick?

BAKANCHOS: Because we used to go there.

LEVINE: Your family?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah. The family used to go there. They lived on the end street, up Butler [PH] Street.

LEVINE: Mmm, uh-hmm. So—

BAKANCHOS: And th—we used to keep—kill pig and his father used to kill the pig.

LEVINE: I see.

BAKANCHOS: And I used to put the water on the pig when he was burning it and was scraping it, used to help him to put the water on it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So some of the things that you did here in Franklin were the same kind of things that you did in Hungary, huh?

BAKANCHOS: [chuckles] Yeah.

HELLER: If I may interject, Dad was born here in the United States. Right?

BAKANCHOS: No, [unclear].

HELLER: He was born in the United States.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, United States.

HELLER: Okay. You said no. Carteret, New Jersey. Then he went back and then they got caught in the war.

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: And they couldn't come back. And then that's when he came back.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: Okay. So then when you married your husband, he came back to Franklin, or he came to Franklin to live?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Because he had been working in—

HELLER: Secaucus.

LEVINE: —Secaucus.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah. Well, he quit, though, with there and then he come back here.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. Now, was there a big Hungarian community here in Franklin at that time?

BAKANCHOS: Used to be but no more.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: A lot of people died.

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: We had a Hungarian church but don't h—now, everybody goes to English church.

LEVINE: I see.

BAKANCHOS: Because they—somebody bought the Hungarian church and fixing it over for—

HELLER: Another thing, if I may interject again, this area is called Siberia because it was made up of Hungarians and Italians and Polish and Czechs and all different types of—of ethnic people. And this is mainly where the Hungarians were situated.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HELLER: Here, and in the next town of—little town of Ogdensburg [PH]. So—

LEVINE: So what did the—what did the Hungarian community do? Did you—did you have get-togethers? Did you have social times?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. They used to have dances. They make dances in the church hall.

HELLER: Dinners.

BAKANCHOS: And dinners.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: And they used to make dances in there. They used to tie a rope on the ceiling and used to put the grapes, stick, you know, gr—grape—bunch of grape. They brought bunch of grape there and when you was dancing, then somebody st—break it down for you. Then they—they take you to the judge and you have to pay—pay for the

grapes. [laughter] There is my picture, my—when I was—70 years ago.

LEVINE: Oh, wow! Oh, I'll—I'll look closer after we're—when we're not hooked up here. Okay, well, let's see. So then—what was your husband's name?

BAKANCHOS: Mike. Michael.

LEVINE: Mike, Michael. And your children? How many children did you have?

BAKANCHOS: One.

LEVINE: Oh, one child. Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: That's Viola, who's here. Right?

BAKANCHOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And [clears throat], well, did you work at all after you got married?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, yeah. I work in silk mill.

LEVINE: Oh, where was the silk mill?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, that—that—in here, town.

LEVINE: In Franklin?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh. And—

BAKANCHOS: And then I—I work in Morley [PH], the shirt factory, Morley's. And then I worked all—all the [unclear].

LEVINE: Oh, in the house? Doing—

HELLER: Cleaning.

LEVINE: —your cl—your cleaning? Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, in a silk mill, I—I run four looms.

LEVINE: Wow. Was that a big industry in this town?

BAKANCHOS: Well, it was but it's not here no more.

LEVINE: No. Uh-huh.

HELLER: You also worked in a hospital, did you not?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, I worked in a hos—I worked all over.

HELLER: [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: I worked in a hospital too.

LEVINE: Now, in the mines, were there a lot of Hungarians working in the mines?

BAKANCHOS: They were most all Hungarian, Polish and Slavish and all kind.

LEVINE: And how about the silk mill?

BAKANCHOS: Well, over there [clears throat] anybody could, you know, go over there too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: But you had to know what you're doing. You know, they teach you—

LEVINE: I see.

BAKANCHOS: —how to weave or—

HELLER: Training.

BAKANCHOS: —different things.

LEVINE: What—what do you feel proud of? What do you feel satisfied that you've done that you could feel good about?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I don't know. [chuckles] I just did what I did and don't—don't feel good about it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: [chuckles]

HELLER: She was a very hard-working woman.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HELLER: My father worked constantly. He worked for the bakery delivering bread and my mother was the sole—she did everything in the house. My father was never here.

BAKANCHOS: I got a big—big lot, big—in the back there. That was a big garden.

HELLER: Garden.

BAKANCHOS: Dig it up and I used to plant. That was full. That's why my fingers are like that.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: T—hard work.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: I had big hedges over there where you cut hedges. When he come home late, he couldn't do nothing because it was dark already.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: He just do little—little things but he couldn't work in a garden and dig in there, stuff like that.

HELLER: He had to do his books, I remember.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, he had to do books.

HELLER: He had to do his bookwork at night.

BAKANCHOS: Book.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So do you feel that, coming here as a young—as a child, coming to this country, do you think that made a big difference in the way that you did things, or the way you thought about things or how you lived your life? Do you think the fact that you came here as an immigrant when you were young made a difference to you?

BAKANCHOS: Hmm, I don't know. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah.

HELLER: Sure it did.

LEVINE: It's a funny question. In other words, do you think that, because you had that experience of changing from where you were to something completely new, do you think that that—that made you feel differently than, say, if you were born here?

BAKANCHOS: No, it didn't make no difference. It's—

HELLER: Well, just ask her one thing. She prefers to stay in the United States. Because when we took her back to Hungary in 1985, we asked her, "Would you like to stay here and live here again like you did before?" And she said no.

LEVINE: Why is that? Why wouldn't you ever want to go back?

BAKANCHOS: Well, it's—it's—

HELLER: Better here.

BAKANCHOS: —diff—different here. You got everything here.

HELLER: [laughs]

BAKANCHOS: If you work, you—you got everything here. But over there, they're very poor.

HELLER: Yeah, and still. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. So you were happy that you had come?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I try to stay here than there.

LEVINE: Yeah. [laughter] And how about your mother and father? Do you think that they were glad? Well, your mother wanted to go back again, though.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, she didn't—she didn't like it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And how about your father?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, my father died young, or early.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: Not young, but early.

HELLER: He died a year after I was born.

BAKANCHOS: He died.

HELLER: 1933.

BAKANCHOS: Died in a—

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: Down in a mine.

LEVINE: In a mine? A mine accident?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh. Oh.

BAKANCHOS: They bring him up from the mine [unclear], went to—took him to the hospital and we went to see him. And next day he died.

LEVINE: Oh, oh. Did your mother and father, and you, too—did you ca—do you carry on certain customs or certain ways of doing things that you did in Hungary in this country? Are there certain, maybe, things that you cook or—

BAKANCHOS: Oh, well. Those—those thing, yeah.

HELLER: And bake. Cook and bake. You make paprikash. You make goulash. You make Hungarian cookies, the—

BAKANCHOS: Stuffed cabbage.

HELLER: Stuffed cabbage. You make the Hungarian cookies at Christmas time.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HELLER: And the—the long stollen-like type, nut filled and [unclear] filled and—

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, you bake—

HELLER: And then you make cheese at Easter time.

BAKANCHOS: Yellow cheese.

HELLER: Yellow cheese.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: So there are still things that she does that I—I don't do.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you—do you have a favorite recipe of something that you make? You could put it on the tape, give us a recipe of something that you like to make that's Hungarian?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I like to make stuffed cabbage.

LEVINE: Oh, then, tell how you do it, what you do.

BAKANCHOS: [chuckles] Well—

HELLER: [laughs] It's a different—

LEVINE: Go ahead.

BAKANCHOS: Have to buy a—the cabbage.

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: And then take the leaves apart. But if it don't come apart, then I put 'em in hot water. You know, cut the inside out and put 'em in hot water. Then in—over there, you pick it—picked apart, pick 'em apart. And when—when that's done, then I put 'em in a bigger pot and put the water on it and salt and let that stand for a while. And then I have to make the stuffing.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: But I used to make it with pork. I buy pork chops and I take the meat off and I grind it myself and the bone, I put on the bottom of the pot.

LEVINE: Oh.

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

BAKANCHOS: Then you make—mixed up—when I grind the meat up, I put the rice in it, salt and pepper and onions, then stuff it, stuff the leaves. And somebody make it small; somebody makes it big. And when I got some leaves left over, chop it up and put—put ‘em on the bottom of the pot on top of the bone.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Then I put the cabbage—you know, put ‘em in there and then put the [clears throat] tomato sauce or tomato juice over. I—I make my own tomato stuff.

LEVINE: You mean from fresh tomatoes or—

HELLER: Uh-hmm, from her garden.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, fresh. Can—I can.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HELLER: She cans.

BAKANCHOS: And I put that on and put a little water—mix—make a—

HELLER: It's like a roux. They call it a roux.

BAKANCHOS: A roux.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HELLER: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: Make that and then we put a—m—water in and mix it and then put—put that water on top of the cabbage and then cook—cook it.

LEVINE: What—how—what temperature?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, not too—

HELLER: Well, she has a gas stove so she just puts on the top.

BAKANCHOS: I've got a gas stove. I haven't got no temperature.

LEVINE: Oh, on top?

HELLER: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: On top of the—top of the—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: No, top of the stove. Well, somebody bake it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: But I cook 'em on top of the stove.

HELLER: How long?

BAKANCHOS: Oh, like an hour. Slow, not fast.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HELLER: And when she makes them, she makes them about the size of your finger, your little pinkie finger. She doesn't make 'em large. And she makes about 40 or so. And then usually, we have 'em for two meals.

LEVINE: Great.

BAKANCHOS: I cut the leaves in—three ways.

HELLER: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: One—one big leaf like this. I cut this part and this part and then this. That's three cabbage I make—

LEVINE: And then you h—you roll in each one of those.

BAKANCHOS: Then I put the stuffing in. I roll them up.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: [laughs]

LEVINE: Good, good. Well, that's good to know. [laughter] Okay. I'm trying to think of anything else that—that we might not have talked about. How about this time in your life, now that you're—you're older and you're child is grown and, you know, you don't have to go to work. And how is this time for you?

BAKANCHOS: Well, same. Not too much difference.

LEVINE: Do you have—do you still have friends around at this point?

BAKANCHOS: Ah, still—still got some. Got my daughter here, my son-in-law.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

HELLER: No, she means friends now, like you have Erma Thomas.

BAKANCHOS: Well, I got Erma.

HELLER: And she has a few people that are—still keep in touch with her. Some of the neighbors. There's a lady down the street that's Hungarian that comes here periodically.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: She comes clean—clean the window for me.

LEVINE: Oh, nice.

BAKANCHOS: When she goes to Europe, she bring this from Europe.

LEVINE: Oh, it's beautiful.

BAKANCHOS: They make—

LEVINE: It's beautiful.

HELLER: [unclear]

BAKANCHOS: They make this over there and they—

LEVINE: Is this from Hungary?

HELLER: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: I give clothes for her.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

HELLER: And she sends 'em over there.

BAKANCHOS: S—sends to Europe.

LEVINE: I see. How nice.

HELLER: Used clothing.

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: Something that's too big for me or too small.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: Or that I don't like. And they wear it over there. They like any kind of clothes.

LEVINE: Yeah. How do you think about yourself as far as Hungarian and American? How—how do—how do you think, as part of your Hungarian—what—how do you—what do you think about that? Do you feel more Hungarian or do you feel more American or—

BAKANCHOS: Well, I feel more Hungarian because still a lot of things English I can, you know, say or—or can write.

HELLER: She can relate to.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: Can write or—

HELLER: You could write. You can write.

BAKANCHOS: Well, I could write there but there, not English.

HELLER: Yes, you can. You can write English.

BAKANCHOS: That's lots of words; I don't understand what they are.

HELLER: Well, but you still—

BAKANCHOS: But I can spell them.

HELLER: You can write.

BAKANCHOS: She says, "If you want to say something," says, "Well, look it up."

LEVINE: Yeah. [chuckles]

BAKANCHOS: Look it up in a dictionary. [chuckles]

LEVINE: What else makes—

HELLER: If I may interject again, we don't speak Hungarian too much, my mother and I. But I speak it fluently and I still read it and write it, because when I was a youngster I taught in a Sunday school here, the Hungarian Sunday school. So, you know, and my—when my grandmother was alive, I spoke Hungarian to her because she didn't speak English. But since my grandmother passed away, she and I converse in English, mostly. So—

LEVINE: But most of your life in this country you've been able to speak Hungarian to people—

HELLER: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —in the—in the town.

BAKANCHOS: Oh, yeah. There is Hungarian people.

LEVINE: You've never had to completely give up your Hungarian.

HELLER: No.

BAKANCHOS: No, no.

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: There is people here that, they Hungarian.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm, uh-hmm. Yeah.

HELLER: Not too many left but there are some.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay. Is there—now, did you—you visited Ellis Island in 1990.

HELLER: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Is that what you said?

HELLER: Yes, we took the—

LEVINE: You went for a visit to Ellis Island?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: Yes, we took a—

LEVINE: Yeah.

BAKANCHOS: When was it? Last year?

HELLER: 1990.

BAKANCHOS: '90? Oh.

LEVINE: Now, h—how—how was that for you, seeing Ellis Island after—

BAKANCHOS: Oh, I—

LEVINE: —all this time?

BAKANCHOS: We didn't see everything.

LEVINE: No. But did it bring back any kind of memories? Or how did you feel?

BAKANCHOS: Mmm, I guess feel that different things, that see all those things there, especially the—that picture. When I saw that, that's my husband's father. Looked just like it. So I don't know if it was him or not.

LEVINE: Well, maybe—

BAKANCHOS: Because he come from this—he come from Europe to this country.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: But I don't know what year.

LEVINE: And you saw his picture up in one of the exhibits?

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: [unclear]

HELLER: She thought.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: I thought it was him because he looked just like him.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, okay. Well, maybe we can find out—

BAKANCHOS: [unclear] when we was going around and looking at the pictures and stuff, I says, “Oh, there’s Grandpa.”

LEVINE: Yeah. [laughter] Uh-huh. Yeah. Okay. Well, I think maybe we’ve covered everything, unless there’s anything else you’d like to say—

BAKANCHOS: Hmm—

LEVINE: —for the tape for Ellis Island.

HELLER: Well, thank her and appreciate the interview.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yes. Well, thank you. Thank you very much.

BAKANCHOS: [unclear].

LEVINE: Very interesting. I’m happy I got to see you.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

HELLER: Yeah.

LEVINE: And maybe when you visit Ellis Island next time, we can track down and see what we can find out about that picture.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay? Okay, this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And I’ve been speaking with Helen Bakan--Bakanchos—

HELLER: Right.

LEVINE: —who came from Hungary at 11 years of age, which is the second time that you came to this country from Hungary. Okay. And it’s March 1st, 1997.

HELLER: No, May.

LEVINE: I'm sorry. May 1st, 1997.

BAKANCHOS: [chuckles]

LEVINE: And I'm signing off. [tape off/on] Now, we're going to add something to this tape, which we just were talking about after we turned it off. And that is in the folder we're going to have a picture of the wedding party of Mr. and Mrs. Bakanchos. And w—it's—it's gigantic. It's a [chuckles] large number of people. [laughter] And so if you could tell us, Helen, what it is—what—where you got married and anything that you can remember about the ceremony, the Hungarian church and everything.

BAKANCHOS: Well, we got married in a Hungarian church and we had a big wedding. It used to be a paint factory. It's on Rutherford Avenue. That's where we had our wedding.

LEVINE: In Franklin?

BAKANCHOS: In Franklin. And we had a lot of food. We had stuffed cabbage, chicken paprikash and the—they killed a pig and all the—what'd they call them? The meat.

HELLER: Sausage.

BAKANCHOS: Meat. You know, they used to make it. [unclear] how they made it but they had a l—too much to eat.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: They used to—there was a lady. She used to pack her pocketbook full with food [laughter] to take it home.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, did you invite a lot of people?

BAKANCHOS: What? All the people was there and then all their mothers and fathers and children. They all was there.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

BAKANCHOS: They were full, that place.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HELLER: How many?

BAKANCHOS: Well, I don't know. I—I didn't count them, how many. But there was lot.

HELLER: A lot.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

BAKANCHOS: A lot.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then did you come right to this house after you were married? Or not right away?

BAKANCHOS: No. We rented a house in Ogdensburg. And that's where we went. And then from there, we was looking for a house to buy. And [clears throat] we—we bought this one. But this was only four room.

LEVINE: Oh.

BAKANCHOS: And we added—add to it.

HELLER: And tell her how much you paid for this house and what year you bought it.

BAKANCHOS: 1931. 1931, we bought the house.

HELLER: For?

BAKANCHOS: One thousand—I don't know. I forgot already.

HELLER: I thought you said 2,900.

BAKANCHOS: Two thousand, nine hundred. I forgot already how much.

LEVINE: Wow.

BAKANCHOS: But then [unclear] cheap. But [clears throat] we build a kitchen and bathroom and then the—

HELLER: Extended—

BAKANCHOS: —the front and the porch, build a garage and made lot of—a lot of work on it.

EI-872/BAKANCHOS

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HELLER: A lot of changes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. Okay, well, then we're going to close again now.

HELLER: Okay.

LEVINE: And this time we'll really close. [laughter]

HELLER: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much.

BAKANCHOS: Yeah, yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW]