

EI-891

MYRNA [PH] GOLDBERG

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INTERVIEWER: PAUL SIGRIST

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RUSSIA, 1930

AGE: 19

SHIP:

PORT: HAMBURG, GERMANY

RESIDENCES:

SIGRIST: Good morning. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday, May 27th, 1997. I'm in West Hartford, Connecticut. I'm at the Hebrew Home. And I'm here with Mrs. Myrna Goldberg.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: Mrs. Goldberg came from Russia in 1930. She must have been 19 when she came.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: Okay. [chuckles] Great. Can we begin by you giving me your birth date, please?

GOLDBERG: I was b—really born in Romania.

SIGRIST: You were born in Romania.

GOLDBERG: Yes, on December the 3rd, 1910.

SIGRIST: And do you remember the name of the town you were born in in Romania?

GOLDBERG: Bucharest.

SIGRIST: You were born in the city of Bucharest.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: Do you know anything about your birth? Did anyone ever tell you a story about the day you were born?

GOLDBERG: No, no. [chuckles] Nobody—in there, you had to make it short, even when it comes to birth certificates, you know. We didn't get a birth certificate when we're—when we're born, you know. If we have to go someplace, we need a passport or something, you go down there, like a city hall and you ask 'em. You tell 'em the date you were born, which they didn't know if it's right or wrong. And they give you—they give you a birth certificate.

SIGRIST: Is that how you got yours?

GOLDBERG: So that's how I got mine. So I didn't know exactly how old I am.

SIGRIST: I see. Did your mother or your father ever tell you about the circumstances on the day that you were born or anything about, like when your mother was carrying you? Anything like that?

GOLDBERG: No, it was tough living down there, you know. And they really didn't talk too much about themselves. And they didn't talk too m—they were afraid to say anything about the country, you know. You have to be hush-hush with everything.

SIGRIST: How did your parents end up in Romania?

GOLDBERG: Well, my parents were some—my—my father and mother were born there.

SIGRIST: They were born in Romania?

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: In Bucharest?

GOLDBERG: No, they weren't born in Romania. They were born in—in Russia. But we have my—my father was a cattle dealer, like, you know.

SIGRIST: Cattle.

GOLDBERG: Cattle dealer. So he heard then Romania has a better deal than Russia so he went there. You know, we all went there. We were a family of nine—nine kids, five boys and four girls.

SIGRIST: And that's where you were born was when—

GOLDBERG: And that's where I was born and then—then it got—he figured out—he met some man and he told him that, "In Russia the—the business that you're doing in Russia is much better than in Romania." So [chuckles] he went back to Russia.

SIGRIST: How old were you when you moved back to Russia?

GOLDBERG: I was only seven years old.

SIGRIST: What memories of Romania do you have?

GOLDBERG: Not too much because, the only thing I remember is we were going to school and we had Romanian books and everything else. And all of a sudden, you know, the—got to change the books, get Russian books. The Russians are coming, you know. So we got Russian books. Then is the same old story when I went to Russia, you know. We kept on changing books and we never made nothing out of our—our education, really—really, you know.

SIGRIST: Do you remember where in—like, what the house looked like or the apartment that you lived in in Bucharest?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. Well, I remember, yes. It was a pretty nice house. It was a long corridor, like, you know. And in the back it was like a—a big yard that he kept his cattle there, you know. And it—it was—to us, we thought it was wonderful.

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

GOLDBERG: Moras.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

GOLDBERG: M-O-R-A-S.

SIGRIST: M-O—

GOLDBERG: R—

SIGRIST: R.

GOLDBERG: —A-S.

SIGRIST: And you said he was a cattle dealer.

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What do you know about his family background?

GOLDBERG: Not much because when I was born the only thing I remember is his mother was living with us, and they carried her out. You know, she passed away. I was sitting on the steps and I was, maybe, oh, I don't know, about three or four years old. And—and I w—didn't know what it was all about. That—that's all I know. We—we really didn't—they didn't talk too much about it when I was young, anyway. Of course, were so many kids, maybe the oldest one. I was the youngest one out of the nine kids. So—

SIGRIST: Tell me about your father's personality.

GOLDBERG: Oh, he was terrific. He was a real, real father. He was so nice and he was really terrific. And—and my mother and father, both of them.

SIGRIST: Can—can you tell me some of the things that your father liked doing with his family?

GOLDBERG: Yes, we used to go to synagogue, you know, a certain time until they started to close all the synagogues and everything else. And we used to go to the park. He used to take us to the park. Our main recreation was to go and walk around in the park and buy an ice cream cone or, at that time, they didn't have no ice cream cones, but an ice cream, and walk around and talk for a while and then go home and do what—really, nothing special. But it was worth a million dollars. He used to sit at a table and used to tell us all stories, you know, from—from his young days.

SIGRIST: Can you remember any of these stories?

GOLDBERG: No. No, I can't re—I was too young.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

GOLDBERG: My mother's name was Heike [PH] Klarin. Klarin.

SIGRIST: Can you spell—

GOLDBERG: Yeah, like you [unclear] all the Klarin—K-L-A-R-I-N.

SIGRIST: And what was her maiden name?

GOLDBERG: My—her maiden name was Suhena.

SIGRIST: Oh, dear.

GOLDBERG: S-U-H-E-N-A. Suhena.

SIGRIST: And do you know anything about your mother's family background?

GOLDBERG: N—that, I didn't—never met no—nobody of my mother's because they—they were gone way before.

SIGRIST: Do you—did your mother ever talk about her childhood and that sort of thing?

GOLDBERG: No, no. They—somehow, they never talked about their childhood. They just talked about telling stories what happened, you know but not really anything important that I could put it in my mind, like—like when I came from the Old Country here. There's things I have in my mind that I—I didn't think I could ever forget it, you know. I have—

SIGRIST: But they didn't really talk about—

GOLDBERG: They did—no.

SIGRIST: No. What do you remember about when the family moved from Bucharest to Russia?

GOLDBERG: No, I remember that—how we were carrying the bundles and all that. I was only seven years old and didn't let me do anything, you know. And then we were—we got a—a nice home there too and most everything was pretty good, you know, and—for a while.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the town that you moved to?

GOLDBERG: I think it was Kashinov [PH].

SIGRIST: Kashinov?

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Is that a city or town?

GOLDBERG: It's a small town.

SIGRIST: Small town.

GOLDBERG: Yeah. That where they had all the excitement, all the pogroms and all the—the killing and all the Jews taken away, the kids, small kids from the—

SIGRIST: Do you remember any pogroms?

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you talk about that a little bit?

GOLDBERG: Not too—too deep. I remember one time they were coming around. Next—next door to us there was a neighbor, you know. Her brother was in—in the army and he was a big shot in there. So—and he was very—he—she used to like us very much, all the kids and my mother and father, you know. We were sitting having tea together and everything else. [sniffs] And so when she heard that they're going to take some of the Jewish kids away, you know, she tell my mother, you know, and she—we used to go in in her cellar and we used to hide in her cellar. She used to put crosses on us so—so we wouldn't look Jewish. And she'd tell the people that came to—to pick us up, you know, used to say, "Well, who are all those kids?" You know. Of course, not all of them were home the same time. The oldest one were all right already. It's just the young kids that were taken away. So I said—so she said to them, "Oh, they're my kids. Can't you see? They're my kids." So, you know, "Don't you dare touch 'em," you know, "My s—my brother's so and so and so," you know. And so they let us go. That's the only time I remember because it was before my time.

SIGRIST: Can you talk about within your time in Russia the relationship between the gentile population and the Jewish population?

GOLDBERG: Bad. Very, very bad. It—we really couldn't do anything. We couldn't go to synagogue. We couldn't—we—they closed all the syna—they even closed the Catholic churches so it wasn't just the synagogues. And we couldn't have no freedom at all, you know. We were afraid to

go here. We were afr—we were afraid to go here too, here too.
[chuckles] Well, anyway—

SIGRIST: What was going on at that time that would have created that kind of feeling between the two groups?

GOLDBERG: They wanted to take over the city. They wanted to take it over.

SIGRIST: But who is “they?”

GOLDBERG: The Romanians. The Romania wanted to take ‘em over, you know. And then when we g—and then the Germans, you know, came in and all that, you know. I was a little bit older already but it was—it’s just after I left that they really started, the big things started. Because when I went back to Russia to see my sisters—you know, after I was here for a while, I went back. At that time, my sisters, you know, they—they killed the—the Germans already were in there—and they killed my sister, her husband, the kids and the grandchildren. They buried them all in one grave. [clears throat]

SIGRIST: That’s quite a bit later.

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: [unclear]. When you were growing up in Russia, tell me about school, going to school.

GOLDBERG: I didn’t [chuckles] remember too much about it. You know, I went to school. I remember going to school with the books and all that. And I remember that we were afraid to say anything, you know. They used to call us Jedufki [PH]. That means Jewish kids, you know. And we were afraid to say anything. We were afraid to open our mouth for anything. That’s all I—I really remember. And—

SIGRIST: What about your parents? How educated were your parents?

GOLDBERG: In Jewish. The—all the education they had is more in Jewish than anything else.

SIGRIST: Could your mother read and write?

GOLDBERG: In Jew—in Russian a little bit.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

GOLDBERG: You know, and the same thing with my father. They weren't too educated in anything, really, just in Jewish. Jewish, they were very, very educated.

SIGRIST: Can you—can you talk to me a little bit about how you practiced your religion at home?

GOLDBERG: At home, yes. We practiced it as much as we could.

SIGRIST: And how would you do that?

GOLDBERG: In—like, for instance, when—when one—one of our kids, the boys were born, you know, you have to have circumcision and everything else. So—and we couldn't—we were forbidden for—for having it. So we knew a fellow that—a man. He was like a rabbi, you know. And he—at nighttime, he came when it was dark. And they closed all the shades and all the windows and everything else. They had this little light so he could come and circumcise the boys. And they had a little bit of cake and whiskey and nothing special, because they didn't want anybody to know about it, you know, because they didn't allow to do that. I remember things like that and I remember how we were hiding, you know, [unclear]—

SIGRIST: Can you talk to me how your family celebrated Passover at that time?

GOLDBERG: Pa—we—we had Passover. I remember they used to—we used to buy matzahs [PH] and we—m—my father and my brother, the oldest one, they used to go to buy matzahs in a big sheet. Yeah. And we used to carry the sheet, you know, on the street, you know, with the matzah in it, you know. And they used to hang it in the corner, you know, from one door—door to the other, used to hang the matzah. They used to cover it up with towels and things. And we had the regular seders and everything else but not outside of the home.

SIGRIST: And we should say, for the sake of the tape—can you—can you define for me what a seder is for the tape?

GOLDBERG: Well, a seder is, you know, is—used to explain it, is all about Passover and all about why we have Passover and why we eat matzahs and why we do this, all—explain it to us all about it. And my father used to do all the explaining.

SIGRIST: Is there a prayer that you learned as a child that you could say for me on tape in Hebrew or Yiddish or Russian, even?

GOLDBERG: Well—well, I tell you, I don't think I'd remember it, you know, clearly [chuckles] to say it over the tape.

SIGRIST: Do you want to try or—

GOLDBERG: No. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: Okay, all right. Tell me a little bit about who was the most religious person in your family.

GOLDBERG: My father.

SIGRIST: Your father.

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: And—and why do you say that?

GOLDBERG: Because he was. He was the leader. And he used to—the one, he used to tell us all different stories about the Jew—Judaism. He used to tell us all about different things and about the highest religion, people, you know, and why this was done and why that was done, you know. I don't remember to tell you about it but he's the one that used to lead. He was the leader.

SIGRIST: You said that there was a synagogue in town.

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: That it was difficult to go to?

GOLDBERG: Was quite a few.

SIGRIST: Well, can you describe for me the synagogue that your family went to and where you sat in the synagogue?

GOLDBERG: Well, I'll tell you. One we went to was a—a small room. And when you walked in, it's like you walked in in any little house. It was nothing special on top. It says a—a synagogue, you know, and all that. And we walked in. It was chairs, like, a synagogue. Nothing exactly like here but we had chairs we sit on. And then the rabbi say the prayers and everything else, and just a normal, normal prayer and ever—every Saturday prayer or—or Friday or—or occasions, different kind of holidays, you know. If there was special prayers, and used to—and then it got so that they—they decided they want to close them, so we couldn't go. We used to, a lot of times, like

Passover or—or the holy holidays, we used to say the prayers in the house. You—my father used to lead us and we used to follow him. That's why I really don't know where—don't—don't remember exactly because we really didn't learn, because we couldn't have no—my time, when I was growing up, we—you couldn't have no teacher, Jewish teachers, you know. And we didn't have this and we didn't have that. And I really couldn't go through much, you know.

SIGRIST: S—so as things became more difficult—

GOLDBERG: More—

SIGRIST: —to—to—to practice your religion in public—

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: —it seems to me that you—you spent more time at the home than—

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: The home became more important.

GOLDBERG: It's all—yes, that's the only thing you could do is in the house. Everything was in the house.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me how your family observed the Sabbath?

GOLDBERG: The Sabbath, like everybody else. My mother used to—

SIGRIST: What day is the Sabbath in the Jewish religion?

GOLDBERG: What—what do you mean? On Friday night.

SIGRIST: Friday night.

GOLDBERG: Friday night.

SIGRIST: And then what—

GOLDBERG: And Saturday.

SIGRIST: —would happen on Friday night?

GOLDBERG: Right. And she used to light the candles and we used to all stay and watch—all the girls used to watch—you know, say the prayer and everything else, which I—even now, I still light the candles on Friday

night, till I came here. And here, it's different. They have electric candles. They don't allow—

SIGRIST: Here in America or here at the Hebrew Home?

GOLDBERG: No, in the Hebrew Home.

SIGRIST: Oh, I see.

GOLDBERG: Oh, no. In America, had—I used to light candles every Friday night.

SIGRIST: And then, were there—were there certain—how did you eat on the Sabbath?

GOLDBERG: Well [sighs]—

SIGRIST: When you were growing up. Do you remember?

GOLDBERG: When I was growing up, it was—it was so different, you know?

SIGRIST: Could you cook on the Sabbath?

GOLDBERG: No, no.

SIGRIST: So what would you eat?

GOLDBERG: Well, we used to have a little—we used to have a—a gentile man that used to come in on Saturday morning and light the—the pilot for us, you know, the gas. We didn't have—at that time, we had, oh, I don't know how to explain it to you but was like a—a—it wasn't—it wasn't a gas stove. It was more with coal and with wood and stuff like that, you know. So he used to come in and light it and my mother'd tell him what to do. He'd pick up the soup, what he had there and put it on to keep it warm and Father's coffee and things, you know. They kept things—so some of the things all night on this very small—used to keep it nice and warm, you know. It was very hard but it was—to us, it was good. We were all together and we were very happy people. And was good.

SIGRIST: It's interesting that a—that gentile is—is—is—

GOLDBERG: Yeah, he—he—

SIGRIST: He's helping, in a way. I—I assume you paid the man to do this.

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. So he—

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: So his job is sort of assisting the Jewish community.

GOLDBERG: Right. No, they—they were—some of them were nice. We had some neighbors next door who were very nice gentile people, very, very nice. And—and that's how we got along.

SIGRIST: Before you came to the United States, did you have a job in Russia that you got paid for?

GOLDBERG: Yes, I used to make—I used to make material.

SIGRIST: How did you do that?

GOLDBERG: Rugs and thing. It is a long, long—I remember like now [chuckles]—a mill-like, you know, in the—with the thing there. And they used to give me the things and a little ball, and I used to throw this way and press it on, and throw this way and press it on, and make all different rugs and make all different things.

SIGRIST: The—the way that you're gesturing as you're describing it, it sounds like it was a loom of some sort. Is it a—you thread—thread through it?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, something like that. And then there was a—a foot stand that you used to put your foot on, you know, to make it move, you know.

SIGRIST: Who taught you how to do that?

GOLDBERG: When I worked for the fellow that I worked to—

SIGRIST: Oh.

GOLDBERG: That I worked for. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you do the—where did you do this? In your house or—

GOLDBERG: No, in—in a place where they make 'em. It was a little shop or something, you know.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you got paid for—

GOLDBERG: [laughs]

SIGRIST: —for—for—back then?

GOLDBERG: I didn't get too much. [chuckles] But I don't remember, honestly, now.

SIGRIST: What kind of money did they use in Russia?

GOLDBERG: Well, they had—they had all different kind of monies. They have [unclear]. They have different paper ones, you know, dollars and two dollars and—but who—who could see them?

SIGRIST: [laughs] Tell me what you would do or your family would do for entertainment? How—how did they—how did they enjoy themselves when they—when they weren't working at that time?

GOLDBERG: This is the only entertainments we had is if we go to the [unclear] park walking or if somebody invited you for a—for a dinner or something, or we invited somebody else. We'd get together in the afternoon. Every afternoon, my mother used to make a samovar. You know what a samovar is?

SIGRIST: Can you describe—

GOLDBERG: You make—

SIGRIST: —it for us for the tape, though?

GOLDBERG: Yes. It's—it's a big, big thing. Too bad I haven't got it. I gave it to the kids. I had one here and used to—

SIGRIST: It's big. What is it made out of?

GOLDBERG: It was made out of, like, iron. It's—wasn't—

SIGRIST: Metal.

GOLDBERG: Metal, a metal one, yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. And what goes inside the samovar?

GOLDBERG: Inside, there used to—used to put little pieces of coal in it and light it and put—the water was a thing like—like something in the middle, you know, and the water was going all around and put the water—you had a little faucet, you know, that you opened it up to let it—after

it boiled, you open up the faucet and you put it in the cups, you know, and—

SIGRIST: And then what would you do with the water once you—

GOLDBERG: Drink it. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: You drank just plain hot water?

GOLDBERG: No, we had tea.

SIGRIST: Right, mm-hmm.

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah. We had tea. We had lemon and we had tea. But every afternoon, we had to have tea with lemon. And my mother used to make all different kind of cookies, and we'd have cookies and everything else.

SIGRIST: Can you talk, actually, a little bit about the kinds of food that you ate in Russia at that time?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, well, the food was regular food. I mean, nothing—nothing special. What my mother cooked, we ate and we enjoyed it and—

SIGRIST: What would be an average meal for you back—

GOLDBERG: An average meal would be like—like on Saturday, she'd make chicken soup and chicken, you know. And she'd make a different kind of puddings or something for dessert and cake and stuff like that. And—and—

SIGRIST: Your father's in the cattle business. How much beef did you eat at that time?

GOLDBERG: Oh, wow. We had enough of beef. We really couldn't keep kosher because kosher meat, you know, is—was a no-no there. So we eat what—what we could. We had to live. So we had enough meat. She used to make stews. You know, we used to have steaks and we used to have meat. We had more than enough. But Saturday, we had to have chicken.

SIGRIST: As a—as a child growing up, what was your favorite thing that your mother made?

GOLDBERG: Oh, she used to make pastries, strudel and stuff like that. I don't know if you know was strudel is.

SIGRIST: Can you describe—

GOLDBERG: It was—

SIGRIST: —what she made?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. As a matter of fact, I used to make it when I was home, even now. They make a thin, thin dough, like the phyllo dough. Did you ever see the phyllo dough?

SIGRIST: Phyllo dough, yes.

GOLDBERG: Right. Well, sh—she used to make it herself, which I made it myself too, you know. And she used to roll it out for so thin that you could see through it without anything. You could see through it, you know. And on top, you know, she put—she put some nuts. And she put raisins and, which I did too. And she—and she put cooked prunes and a lot of different things, you know. And then you roll it up like an—a long, long roll like that, you know. And you make it any thick you want and you bring the dough around and you bake it, you know. You put a little bit—smear it up with a little bit of butter. Oh, it's delicious.

SIGRIST: That was your favorite.

GOLDBERG: That was our favorite.

SIGRIST: What—on what kind of an occasion would she make that?

GOLDBERG: Special. It had to be special, like my sisters and brothers got married, and special holidays and stuff like that. Not just everyday, because it was very expensive dessert, you know. And we couldn't really afford it, to have it all the time, so it was just special occasions she used to make. And that's why we're so hungry for it. It was—it was special.

SIGRIST: Tell me, when you were—when you were growing up in Russia, what did you know about America before you got to America?

GOLDBERG: Really, not too much. I expected America to be the most beautiful thing in the whole world, because they used to say, "You go to America. You look on the street and you find money. You don't have to work in America. You go to America, you know. You push a button. A girl comes out and lets you in. You push a button, you know, you get a cup of coffee," which is true, you know, but I could

never figure it being that way. But I had that in mind. That's why I'm bringing in the—Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: Well, let me—before we get you to Ellis Island, let's—why did you want to come to the United States?

GOLDBERG: My—my father—my sister came to her husband. Her husband was taken out by his uncle.

SIGRIST: His uncle was in the United States?

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: What was your sister's name?

GOLDBERG: Sonya Oberstein.

SIGRIST: Can you spell Oberstein, please?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. And—

SIGRIST: Can you spell Oberstein?

GOLDBERG: O-B-E-R-S-T-E-I-N.

SIGRIST: Thank you. And tell me about how she got to America.

GOLDBERG: She got to America through her husband. They wanted to squabble so much in Russia, they couldn't take it any longer. So her fath—her husband said to her after she got married—she said, "What do you say I write to my uncle and see if he'll take us out to America?" You know. So she wrote to her—he wrote to him and he said, "Sure, you could come." He said, "I'll take care. I'll send you all the papers and I'll send you everything and you come out." He had to come alone because my sister couldn't come with him. It was a quota that you could—

SIGRIST: A quota.

GOLDBERG: Husband could go to wives, and wives could go to husbands. And kids could come to parents, and parents could come to kids. But I—well, let me got there.

SIGRIST: Okay.

GOLDBERG: [chuckles]

SIGRIST: What year did she come to the United States?

GOLDBERG: Oh, that's—that's—I [several words unclear]. I don't know what year she—

SIGRIST: Okay.

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: W—was it a long time before you—

GOLDBERG: Quite—oh, yes. Quite a long time.

SIGRIST: And where did she settle in the United States?

GOLDBERG: She settled in Waterbury.

SIGRIST: In Waterbury, Connecticut.

GOLDBERG: Yes, and they lived in Waterbury until—till they went to America.

SIGRIST: And—and what did—what did her husband do for a living?

GOLDBERG: He was a butcher too.

SIGRIST: He was a butcher.

GOLDBERG: He—yeah. He was involved in the meat too. So he came here first and then he took my sister out. My sister couldn't take my father and mother out and me the same time. So my father and mother came alone and they left me with one of my sisters back in Russia, you know. And then, after quite a while, when my father was—was—he came here. He was sick. And he happened a—a year before I came to this country, he passed away. And you were saying how—how you—my—my father was. I'll tell you how he was. Before he died, you know, he said, "I—I don't mind dying." He said, "But I want to see Mychka." [PH] That's me, in Russia. My name's Manya [PH]. He said, "I want to see Mychka before I—before I die." You know. But he didn't.

SIGRIST: Mm-hmm.

GOLDBERG: You know, they opened him up. He had cancer and he—he passed away. So they bringing everything in, one to the other, you know.

SIGRIST: Did he—did—did your mother and father go to Waterbury to live with your sister?

GOLDBERG: Yes, because my sister—my sister lived in Waterbury and we all came straight to Waterbury.

SIGRIST: Let me—before we go any farther, can you—your name was Manya?

GOLDBERG: Manya Dorfman. D—

SIGRIST: Manya. Can you spell Dorfman, please?

GOLDBERG: D-O-R-F-M-A-N.

SIGRIST: D-O-R-F-M-A-N.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: Manya Dorfman.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: And then—then it was changed to Myrna—

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: —here in the United States.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: [sentence unclear].

GOLDBERG: When I got my citizenship papers, I wanted my [unclear], you know, because they changed my name and, anyway—

SIGRIST: Do you remember when your parents left to go to the United States?

GOLDBERG: Left?

SIGRIST: When they left Russia to go to the United States, do you remember—

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: —how you felt about them—

GOLDBERG: I felt very, very—

SIGRIST: —leaving?

GOLDBERG: Oh, I felt very bad.

SIGRIST: How did they feel about going to the United States?

GOLDBERG: Worse than me. See, the other ones were married. The other sisters were married and brothers, you know, and my—my brother was a doctor in Romania, because that's the only place you could—and then he changed his name so he wouldn't be a Dorfman. Jewish people couldn't go to college, you know. So he changed the name and he went—he stayed in Romania and he graduated for doctor and he had his office and everything else. And they were all married but me. And that's why they felt so bad why they had to leave me.

SIGRIST: And you were the youngest [unclear].

GOLDBERG: I was the youngest—

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

GOLDBERG: —out of the nine kids. So—but they felt very, very bad, crying. I could see—see them crying even now. And that's it.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

SIGRIST: So they came to Waterbury. They settled with your sister and her husband, who's a butcher.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: They left you in Russia with your other—

GOLDBERG: Russia.

SIGRIST: —sister.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: What was the sister's name that they left you with?

GOLDBERG: Atl. Atl—what's—

SIGRIST: A—can you spell that, Atl?

GOLDBERG: Atl. What's her last name, see?

SIGRIST: That's all right.

GOLDBERG: Czik [PH].

SIGRIST: Can you spell all that?

GOLDBERG: Oh, come on. [laughter] C-Z-I—I don't know. I—

SIGRIST: That's close enough.

GOLDBERG: [laughs]

SIGRIST: What about Atl? How do you spell Atl?

GOLDBERG: Atl, like you spell here Atl. It's the same—

SIGRIST: Atl?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. There is Atls here.

SIGRIST: Atl? That's her first name?

GOLDBERG: That's her first name.

SIGRIST: Atl?

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Oh, I'm not familiar with that name. Maybe A-T-L? Atl?

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Something. [chuckles]

GOLDBERG: Atl—something. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: Well, can you—can you tell me a little bit about what your life was like after your parents went to America and you were staying with your sister?

GOLDBERG: It wasn't really too bad. They treated me very nice but I missed my father and mother very badly. And that's it. Then they started working on getting me out and then—

SIGRIST: Can you talk about the process of what you had to do to get ready to leave Russia?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes. My main thing was getting a passport because I didn't know how old I was. I didn't know what year I was born because you never get anything like that. It's—when you get your passport, then you tell them when you were born. So my sister wrote to me. I mean, maybe I shouldn't even say it over the tape. [chuckles] But my sister wrote to me and she told me, "When you go down there, you know, tell them you were born on December the 3rd, 1910." So that's what I told them.

SIGRIST: Where did you have to go to get the passport?

GOLDBERG: It was like a small city hall. A couple of girls were sitting there and I said to them in Russian, said, "I'm going to America. I need a passport," you know. And she asked me different questions and I answered. I didn't even know the questions she asked me. And I answered them and she said, "When were you born?" I said, "December the 3rd, 1910." So [chuckles]—

SIGRIST: So be it. [chuckles]

GOLDBERG: So it is.

SIGRIST: So it was right in that one town, the town that you lived in—

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: —where you went.

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What else did you have to do to get ready to leave?

GOLDBERG: Well, I had to, you know, get a few—really, nothing, you know. Just a few things, you know. I—

SIGRIST: What about a medical exam of some sort?

GOLDBERG: No, no. I didn't need no medical. I didn't need nothing.

SIGRIST: What did you pack to take with you to America?

GOLDBERG: What I had. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: Which was what?

GOLDBERG: It is not too much. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: What did you have?

GOLDBERG: Well, I had a couple dresses. I had a raincoat, you know, and I had a hat, a couple pairs of gloves, shoes. My—my—my sister's husband was a shoe—he was making shoes. He wasn't a shoemaker. He was making shoes. So he made me a couple of pairs of shoes and they were beautiful, and—and odds and ends on the clothes and stuff like that. There isn't really too much. You know, you carried one suitcase that was all packed. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: Now—now, were you going to be coming to America alone or was your sister—

GOLDBERG: Alone.

SIGRIST: —going with you or—

GOLDBERG: No. That's why it was—no, my sister was there—here already. My mother and father were here already—

SIGRIST: I meant the sister that you were staying with in Russia.

GOLDBERG: No, no.

SIGRIST: She was going to stay—

GOLDBERG: She had a family and kids and everything. She wasn't going to leave—leave her kids and—to go. And she wasn't even a—no, no. They took me out because I wasn't married. The other ones, they didn't want to leave their kids to go to America. But I was anxious. I figured, "I'm going to a beautiful country and find money in the street." [laughs]

SIGRIST: The—the day that you left your sister's house to—to go to the port to leave, how did you feel?

GOLDBERG: I felt very bad because they were very nice to me. And I felt bad because I was afraid.

SIGRIST: What were you afraid of?

GOLDBERG: I was afraid to be all alone. I know I was going on a boat and I always hated water. So I went on the boat.

SIGRIST: Where did you have to go to get on the boat?

GOLDBERG: In Hamburg.

SIGRIST: How did you get from Russia to Hamburg, Germany?

GOLDBERG: By train.

SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about that train ride to Hamburg?

GOLDBERG: Yes, it was a funny ride, you know. It was—I don't know. I was—it's because I was afraid. I was alone. And it's not like here. You're educated in different things. There, we were—we didn't know nothing about nothing, you know. So when I got up on the—on the train I felt kind of blue and some [unclear] when the train pulled away, you know, and—and my sister and the kids and everybody were standing there. And, you know, I got used to it and I went—I had one thing in mind. I'm going to America. That was on my mind. I said, "No matter how bad it was, it's got to"—my mother used to say to us, "No matter how you feel, no matter how sick you are, have one thing in mind that it's got to end sometimes. It doesn't last forever. So I had that in mind; the trip wouldn't last forever. And when I got to Hamburger, Germany, we stayed there very, very poorly, you know. We put out—I don't know. We were sleeping with our clothes on and everything else.

SIGRIST: How many nights did you have to sleep before you could get on the boat?

GOLDBERG: About—about six days.

SIGRIST: And what happened to you while you were in Hamburg?

GOLDBERG: Really, nothing. They gave us a sandwich and stuff like that. No, we didn't. There was no sandwiches there but they gave us something to eat and we ate, and we get up in the morning. It was same old story. You know, we—we—it was really nothing special. Then finally, we went on the boat.

SIGRIST: What did you think when you saw this great big ship that you were going to have to get on?

GOLDBERG: Well, it wasn't really a big, big ship. It was more like a—a small [chuckles] one.

SIGRIST: And I had asked you before the tape, before we were going, if you remembered the name of the ship. What—say what you think it might—

GOLDBERG: St. Santa Claus or St. something.

SIGRIST: St. something.

GOLDBERG: That's all I remember.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the—the line, what shipping line you were going on?

GOLDBERG: No.

SIGRIST: If it's Hamburg, it was probably the Hamburg American Line.

GOLDBERG: I don't no.

SIGRIST: Okay. So tell me what you remember about being on the ship and you—you don't like water. And you have to—

GOLDBERG: Please, please. That was the worst time I ever had. The ship was very shaky and I was sick. I was afraid of the water anyway. I was so sick that they had to tie me down to the bunk. And I couldn't speak. It was a—a—was a tourist boat. It was all American boys and girls. Good. But I couldn't speak English, right? The captain was so nice to me. I wish I'd known his name. I wish I—he was so nice that I can't explain it to you. He used to come in everyday. "Hey, Munchka, you going to eat something today?" You know, he's speaking Russian to me. And, Manya—when I came here and was six languages. Now, I don't know nothing, not even English. And—and he used to be so nice to me, was—was really something. So they tied me down to the bank and I couldn't eat and sick! My God! Nobody should ever be sick like that, [chuckles] how I was. Finally, one day, the captain said, "Come on. Let's go out and I'll give you some soup or something," you know. So I said, "All right." I listened to him because he was very nice to me. So I went up and he gave me a dish of soup and, you know, a big, big table, you know, that—to sit down. And everybody was eating at it, a long, long table. [sniffs]

And I took the spoon, you know, and I was shaking, you know. I was so nervous and I was so—I looked at the water, thought, ‘Boy.’ Just imagine something happens to me. [sniffs] So anyway, I—I look. Where’s my soup? Picked up my hat, you know. My soup was way on the other side of the table. [laughs] That’s how bad it was. And I said to the captain. I said, “Please.” I said, “I want to lay down.” [sniffs] So he said, “Okay. Go lay down.” Finally, the last couple of days it was pretty good. So what happened? There was a leak in the boat. We had to go in little, little boats. So just imagine me being afraid of the water, going in—well, anyway, I had the worst trip anybody could have.

SIGRIST: How long did it last? Do you remember?

GOLDBERG: It—10 days.

SIGRIST: Ten days.

GOLDBERG: Ten days. And so I said, “Oh, my God. One thing, it’s got to be over sometimes. It’s got to be over sometimes.” And I said, “Now, I’m going to America, you know. It’s got to be good,” you know. So—

SIGRIST: Did you see anything on the ship that you had never seen before?

GOLDBERG: No, not—not really anything different, you know. Like a ship, you know. [chuckles] Nothing special.

SIGRIST: Did you see the Statue of Liberty when the ship came—

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: —into New York?

GOLDBERG: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about it?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Yeah, I saw the—then I figured I’m going to—you want me to get into—

SIGRIST: Yeah, go right ahead.

GOLDBERG: I’m going there. It must be—it’s a beautiful place, you know. It must be something to see, you know. And I was just looking forward to go there, you know. We got there. They opened up two wooden doors, like a—like the cattle barn like my father used to open up for the

cattle. [laughs] You know? And we had to climb, I remember, a lot of steps to go inside. And when I went in there the floor was all wood, no chairs. Was a couple chairs there and somebody was sitting on it. And I felt so sick. I lost so much weight and everything else in the 10 days. [sniffs] I—I couldn't stand on my feet so I—I kind of stooped down, you know, [chuckles] to sit on the floor. And I was sitting there and my sister passed me by once and twice and three times. She didn't recognize me. And I didn't—I was so sick I don't recognize anybody. Then finally, after a couple hours sitting there, you know, the captain, "Hey!" he said to me. Of course, in Russian it's different. Didn't say "Hey," but he said, "You still here?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "I don't know where my sister is." I said, "I don't see her." So he went out—outside, you know, and on that loudspeaker, you know, he announced it. He said—and then my sister said—said, "Yeah, that's me," you know, and—and, boy, when I saw her, I'm telling you. And—and they had left me with such a bad impression, you know, when I got to Ellis Island. Very, very bad impression because I said, "Gee," said, "America. Look at the way they greet us," you know. I figured they'll greet us, get us coffee and our—or something, you know, to eat, you know. Well, anyway, it was—left me with a very, very bad impression, you know.

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything else about what you saw or experienced at—

GOLDBERG: I—that—that's all I saw, walls, empty walls, couple of chairs. [chuckles] And I remember the wooden floor and a painting with—on the walls, you know. Wasn't anything special, you know, and a very, very bad greeting. I don't know why but—

SIGRIST: When you—when you finally reunited with your sister, did she look different to you in any way?

GOLDBERG: Well, yes. She looked different, yes. She looked different than what she looked in Russia. She got more modern, you know. She wear nice dresses. She wear her hair nice and everything else. It was entirely different, yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you were wearing when you got—

GOLDBERG: I—yes.

SIGRIST: Can you describe it for me?

GOLDBERG: I was wearing a dr—a plain dress, you know. And I—I had a—a blue—blue raincoat with white trimmings. The collar was white and

white on the—on the cuffs, you know. It was a very, very nice raincoat. And I had a hat to match, you know. And I must have looked very nice because, you know, [chuckles] they were saying, “Oh, how beautiful she looks. How beautiful.” You know, all the fam—[chuckles]

SIGRIST: And do you—what months is this that you arrived?

GOLDBERG: It was before the holiday. Must have been—I should say, oh, in September.

SIGRIST: Before the high holy days?

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Yeah, August or September?

GOLDBERG: Something like that is—yeah, I think it’s in S—in September. Yeah. And—and then—

SIGRIST: Where did your sister take you?

GOLDBERG: Take—from—from there, right to the train and from the train right to Waterbury.

SIGRIST: And does anything stick out in your mind about the train ri—or getting to the train in New York and then going up on the train? Does anything stick out in your mind about that?

GOLDBERG: No, they did nothing special. I was kind of blue, sounded kind of disgusting, you know. [chuckles] It left me with a very bad impression. [chuckles] All of what I went through on the boat and everything else, you know. When I walked in and there’s, oh—and when I walked out on the street I didn’t see no money on the street, that did it. [laughs] And I came here just in the time when the Depression was here, 1930. Depression, a very bad Depression, we had here. And everybody was starving. I was here three days and I went to work in a dress—

SIGRIST: How did you get a job?

GOLDBERG: I couldn’t come here until some big shot, like a rich man vouched for me that if something goes wrong, he’s—he’ll take care of me, you know. So this fellow had a dress shop—one. He had about five, six of them, you know, so when I—when I was here about three days and I saw the way they had to live and they didn’t have nothing to

eat. And my mother, you know, was—was washing the floors on her knees, you know, on my sister's house and everything else. And my sister was sitting and sewing there. And it wasn't what I expected. That's for sure. So after three days, I said, "Well, maybe I'll go to work." So when this man came up to meet me, you know, he used to be very good friends with my sister and my brother-in-law. So he said—I said to him in Jewish—I said to him, you know, "I would like to go to work. You think I could get a job with you?" "Oh, sure," he said. "You could." So when I got there, you know, and, oh, so thrilled I got a job. I worked for a year and a half for \$3 a week.

SIGRIST: And what—what was the job that you got?

GOLDBERG: Dress make—making dresses.

SIGRIST: A—anything specific though or—

GOLDBERG: No, the—we worked for R&K, wor—

SIGRIST: R&K?

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: R&K.

GOLDBERG: And we worked—yeah, and we worked for A—Amy—I've forgotten—uh, Jon—uh, Lo—Jonathan Logan [PH].

SIGRIST: Jonathan Logan.

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me your first day of work?

GOLDBERG: Yes, I walked in in there and the girls were very nice. I couldn't talk to them and they couldn't talk to me and it was a pleasure. [laughs] But then, one of—one of the Polish girls, you know, was sitting right next to me. And she said to me—she said, "Do you speak Polish?" I said, "Well, I understand a lot of things and I speak it a little bit." I said to her, so she started talking to me in Polish. She was a good—and then the bosses and all that and the—the workers there, a lot of Jewish people in there. So I spoke Jewish very frequently. And it was—it was pretty good, you know. The—the shop wasn't anything special. In the summertime, we used to sweat to death and in the wintertime we used to freeze to death. [laughs]

SIGRIST: Was it like a—a—a factory situation?

GOLDBERG: A big—yeah, a big factory. Oh, I'd say a half of this.

SIGRIST: Mm-hmm.

GOLDBERG: And there was a lot of machines. There's a lot of workers and there's—they used to cut materials there, and they used to put the—we used to put the dresses together. We got them all cut, like in a bundle, you know. We—we used to put the dresses together.

SIGRIST: Now, were you encouraged to join a union when you—

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes, after the union came in. Not—

SIGRIST: Can you talk about that?

GOLDBERG: Not right away. Well, we talked to—we w—worked there for quite a while without a union, you know. And we used to make very little.

SIGRIST: That was \$3 a week?

GOLDBERG: Three dollars a week, you know. Was starting to make a little bit more. The more experience, you know, and everything else. And I [clears throat]—this Polish woman said to me. She said, "You know, you're very fast. Why don't you ask him to go on piecework?" So I said, "Well, I'd be glad to ask him but I don't know what he's going to say." [chuckles] So I went over. He didn't want to be called Dibner [PH]. He wanted to be called Izzy. That was his first name.

SIGRIST: Izzy.

GOLDBERG: Izzy.

SIGRIST: His last name was Dimner? Dimner, you said?

GOLDBERG: Dibner.

SIGRIST: Dibner.

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: D-I-B-N-E-R, [unclear].

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: Izzy Dibner was your [unclear]—

GOLDBERG: Well, was—was the boss.

SIGRIST: Boss.

GOLDBERG: The big boss.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

GOLDBERG: I went up to him and I said, “Izzy, would you mind if I go on piecework?” He said, “Look at the greenie. She wants to go on piecework already.” You know what a greenie is, you know. [chuckles] The one that come from the Old Country here. [sniffs] So I said, “M—do you mind if I try it?” He said, “Go ahead and try it.” He called over the man and he said, “Put her on piecework.” And guess what? The first week I made \$27. And he didn’t like that. Then the union came in.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how—h—how—what that process was? How—how you were told that the union was going to come in and—

GOLDBERG: Well, we had a chairman, like, you know. And he found out all about the union and he brought in the union.

SIGRIST: Was the chairman one of the workers?

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: I see.

GOLDBERG: And he wor—then he worked for the union at—all the time, you know. [clears throat]

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the union that came in?

GOLDBERG: Was the—the Ladies Garment—Ladies Garment something.

MAN: International.

GOLDBERG: International.

SIGRIST: International—

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: —Ladies Garment Union.

GOLDBERG: So—so I—some of the girls, you know, they were afraid, you know. And I said to this Polish woman—I said, “What are they so afraid for?” I said, “They’re going to improve. You know, they’re going to take it”—and the bosses were so mean sometimes. Outside of the— the shop, they were wonderful. They’d give you anything. They’d do anything. They’d talk nice and everything else. But in the shop was all business, a hundred percent business. You know. So [clears throat] he said, “Well.” He said, “What is—if he fires us all tomorrow and then we don’t have no job? There’s a Depression going on.” I said, “Let’s wait.” So we took a vote and we won. They wants—they wanted the union. And we went into the union. And after the union, so there—I was talking about the boss, you know. What you made something wrong, you know, he’d take the dress or what you had. You had a m—hand that was no good. He said, “Look at that, how you made it. It’s disgusting.” He’d throw it right in your face, you know. [knocking sound] Yes?

MAN: [unclear]?

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: We’ll just pause for a second right now. [tape off/on] We were talking about the unions.

GOLDBERG: Yeah. So—so when the union came in, he said, “Look.” So the girls were complaining to the union what the bosses do to her, you know, and everything else. So he said, “Don’t worry. When we take over,” he said—“they’re not going to do that,” he said. So we got the union and they used to—he said to the girls—I didn’t even remember—I didn’t remember how much we paid for the union. But anyway, said to the girls—he said, “When the boss comes over to you and he throws the dress at you, or he talks to you rough, or he tells you something that you shouldn’t be saying, just take your chair, move it away from your machine and wait until we come in. Call us up and wait till we come in.” He said, “Don’t do nothing. You’re going to get paid for all those hours that you’re sitting there.” And that’s just what it was. They were very, very nice to us and they gave us raises and everything else and, you know. And then it got a little bit better, you know, the Depression, all that, and—

SIGRIST: Can you talk to me about how you learned English?

GOLDBERG: English? From the girls in the shop in going—I couldn’t learn too much by going to school because I had to work so hard in the shop,

and I was so beat up and everything else. So a couple times I went, night school, you know.

SIGRIST: Beat up, meaning just tired from working?

GOLDBERG: Tired from working. And then I came home and I had to help in the house and everything. So I went a couple night school to, "Close the window. Open the door. Close the door." I said, "Oh, my God. If I have to go through that." You know, and I—

SIGRIST: Those were the phrases that they were teaching you? "Open the window. Close the door."

GOLDBERG: That's it, all those things, you know. Well, anyway, and then I had a tutor. When I worked and I couldn't do it, so—a [unclear], a girl used to come in and she used to tutor me. And I learned how to read and write, got the—you know, went through high—to high school. I got my diploma. I went through—was it three or four—four years, I went to—to college, you know, at—there a little. But—and I went through—

SIGRIST: Did your mother attempt to learn English?

GOLDBERG: Not too much. No, because my sister talked in Jewish. My brother-in-law talked in Jewish. When I came, I talked in Jewish. My father talked in Jewish. And we used to tell her, you know, she's got to talk in English if she's going to learn. But she never went no place.

SIGRIST: I was going to say, can you talk—

GOLDBERG: She didn't work.

SIGRIST: —just a little bit about your mother's life in America?

GOLDBERG: My mother's life in America was very, very tough. She had a tough life because she—till I came, you know, she lived with my sister and my sister wasn't a rich woman. She had to work by repairing dresses. She used to repair dresses. And she—she used to sit and work day and night. And then she had the kids and taking care of the kids, so my mother had to do something. You know, she had to take care of the house and she had to cook and bake and wash the floors and everything else. And—

SIGRIST: Plus, your father died.

GOLDBERG: My father died about a year after she got to America. And—and it was tough, very, very tough life she had. When I came to America I said to myself—I said, “This is not for her.” I said—I said to her one night, I said, “Ma, we’re going to go get a little apartment for you and I,” that I worked already. I was a big shot, you know. I worked, making 27, \$30 a week. You know, it was a lot of money. And so I said—she said, “Gee, your sister’s going to get mad.” I said, “No, she’s not. She’s not going to get—and if she gets mad,” I said, “we have our life to live, our own.” I said, “She has her—I appreciate what she did for me and, you know, for you and all that but we got to get going.” So I’ll never forget, you know. I went out and I got a three little room apartment. And her and I lived—and she used to work for a Jewish bakery—not a baker. It was a restaurant, making all the fancy cookies and all the cakes and all the different kind of strudels and everything else. And that’s how we—we got along.

SIGRIST: So you and your mother sort of started your own life together?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: In our last couple of minutes, can you tell—tell me about becoming a citizen?

GOLDBERG: Well, I was pregnant with my son.

SIGRIST: So you were already married. What year did you get married?

GOLDBERG: I got married in 19—19—Netthem [PH]—this is my second husband.

SIGRIST: I see.

GOLDBERG: Yeah, my son’s father. I got married—let’s see, it’s got to be 60 years—no, 55. Fifty-five years.

SIGRIST: Well, so you were married anyway—

GOLDBERG: Yeah, I was married.

SIGRIST: —at that time.

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: And tell me what you had to go through to become a citizen.

GOLDBERG: Oh, I wouldn't—I—you know, I knew how to read and write pretty good, you know, and I was—my belly standing there and the judge said to me, "You sit down!" [chuckles]

SIGRIST: Because you were quite pregnant at the time.

GOLDBERG: Yes.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

GOLDBERG: Very much. So we asked different—you know, we were a group, was maybe about 35. Four of us got citizenship papers the same time, you know. So we had to answer a couple of questions and everything else and wasn't really too much, and got our citizen papers.

SIGRIST: How did you feel when you became a citizen?

GOLDBERG: I feel very good. I feel I belong now to—to America. You know why? I belong. And I felt good. I feel—figured if something comes up, I'm an American. I'm not a Russian no more. Nobody could touch me but Americans, you know. So I felt good.

SIGRIST: Did your sister become a citizen?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Did your mother become a citizen?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. [knocking sound] Now, what?

SIGRIST: [chuckles] Well, we're almost done yet here. Let me just put this on [tape off/on]—one more time. Just a couple final questions for you. Did you ever go back to Europe, to Russia?

GOLDBERG: Twice.

SIGRIST: Did you go back to the town that you lived in?

GOLDBERG: I went twice.

SIGRIST: Tell—but did you go back to the town that you came from in Russia?

GOLDBERG: That's just what I went, both times.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the first time you went back to the town that you grew up in. How—how did that make you feel when you were there?

GOLDBERG: It made me feel a—a little afraid. Yeah. As much as I knew that—at that time, I wasn't citizen yet, you know. And I—I was afraid, you know, like—I don't know. I was afraid to—even to look around, you know. I thought that they're following me or something or they're—you know, they were so sneaky there. So—but the second time, I was more relieved. I was—I was—still wasn't married yet but I was more relieved and my sister lived very, very poorly, didn't have no bathroom in the house. They had to go outside, you know, and—

SIGRIST: This is your sister who was still in Russia?

GOLDBERG: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

GOLDBERG: Yeah. And that's it. And—

SIGRIST: When you think of yourself in terms of nationality, how do you think of yourself?

GOLDBERG: Jew, there's no doubt about it.

SIGRIST: You think of yourself as a—as a Jew.

GOLDBERG: Right.

SIGRIST: But what about in terms of country? How—how do you most identify yourself in terms of country?

GOLDBERG: An American Jew. Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: What did you do in your life that you're the most proud of?

GOLDBERG: What I did in my life?

SIGRIST: That you're the most proud of?

GOLDBERG: Well, [chuckles] I accomplished a lot of things but nothing that—

SIGRIST: One thing.

EI-891/GOLDBERG

GOLDBERG: Gee, [chuckles] I don't know. I don't know. I really don't—don't know exactly what—maybe—maybe we having a boy, a baby boy and all that, you know, and I—after I was married and [sniffs]—

SIGRIST: Well, Mrs. Goldberg, I want to thank you very much. This has been a wonderful—

GOLDBERG: My pleasure.

SIGRIST: —interview. You've done a great job.

GOLDBERG: Oh, it was my pleasure.

SIGRIST: Good memory.

GOLDBERG: Well, what I could remember. There's—

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Myrna Goldberg on Tuesday, May 27th, 1997 with Mr. Goldberg in attendance, at the Hebrew Home in West Hartford, Connecticut. Thank you.

GOLDBERG: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]