

KECK-148
ANNA VIDA
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HUNGARY, 1921
AGE 10
PASSAGE ON A CUNARD LINE SHIP, EXACT NAME NOT RECALLED

APPLEBOME: This is Edward Applebome and I'm speaking with Mrs.
Anna Vida on the sixth day of
February, Thursday, 1986. We're beginning this interview at about 2:00 PM.
We're about to interview Mrs. Vida about her immigration experience from
Hungary in 1921. Okay, Mrs. Vida, can you tell me where and when you were
born?

VIDA: I was born in a little village called Damocz, Megye,
which means county, and I do think its northern Hungary.

APPLEBOME: Can you spell the name of that town for us?

VIDA: D-A-M-O-C-Z.

APPLEBOME: Okay, thank you. And what was life like in your native country, what do you remember about it?

VIDA: Well, we lived in a little village, one church, two stores, one government store, and one Jewish store, and one synagogue, and one mill for grinding flour and sunflower seed and pumpkin seed, which we used as oil, and also for burning in the lamps. And the property was all on the outside of the village. Nobody really lived on the farm because the terrain was such that, part was clay, part was sand, some was hilly, and other was level and swampy, so you just had a narrow strip and planted what that sort of a ground would accommodate the product you put into it.

APPLEBOME: What kind of work did your family do?

VIDA: All farming and we seldom went to the market, generally they came to us or Grandma would have it sent out to the markets, which incidently they called, "Varshar," and some people get mixed up because "Varsharnak," means Sunday and "Varsharnak," means market day and you leave a dash of the "A" and you've got it mixed up. Uh, I remember the houses had very, very large rooms but we all slept in one room with the curtains like they have in the maternity wards here, I guess, and my greatest joy was

seeing the storks come back. I guess everybody did. Nobody wanted a stork on their roof because they're messy but they were supposed to be good luck. And we had it on ours, and whether it was good luck or not I don't know. And people worked in the community, it was very close, you made a party out of everything, like stripping feathers or harvesting corn or whatever.

APPLEBOME: How big a family did you have?

VIDA: Well, I was the only one until we came back to join Daddy in the United States, we always referred to as America. Then I had a little brother who unfortunately died at the age of three, and then two years later I got a darling little sister who's still tiny and darling. She's fifty years old now, wait a minute, sixty isn't she? Yes.

APPLEBOME: Okay, let's go back to Hungary, I think I may have interrupted you before you said what year you were born.

VIDA: 1911.

APPLEBOME: And explain the circumstances under which you came to immigrate to the United States.

VIDA: Well, Daddy came back, I imagine in 1908 or something

like that, I think I have the note here, to marry my mother.

APPLEBOME: Okay, he had been there ahead of your family?

VIDA: For the second time. He was out here before and I don't know what year he came back, but Mother and dad were married either 1908 or 1909 and I was born in 1911. And--

APPLEBOME: And he'd been in the United States before marrying your mother and--

VIDA: Yes, and then went home. You had to make your fortune, you know. What is this, (she laughs) I don't know.

APPLEBOME: It's okay.

VIDA: Ah, the War broke out and our village was invaded by the Czechoslovakian, that shouldn't be in here anyway, Roumanians and the Czechoslovakians and then at the time they called the communists, "bolsheviks" and they came into our village, too. And, uh, it was rough, I don't like to talk about that, it was very

rough. We were in school when one of the nations invaded us and--

APPLEBOME: Excuse me, you'll just have to not put your hands up over the microphone, okay?

VIDA: Okay. We were in school and they set off, well the alarm was actually a triangular piece of metal and they beat another piece of metal on that and that gave out a very loud and clear alarm. We didn't know what happened and somebody came in, I'm not sure if it was a man or woman, and ripped a sheet apart into different strips and we were told to stay calm and go out, and we held the strips of white cloth, meaning that, "We give up."

APPLEBOME: This was when which army was coming into town?

VIDA: The Roumanians and let me tell you, they're lovely people, they were not the ones doing the fighting. And if someone told me I'd ever go out in front of a group of horses with men on them, with bayonets, you wouldn't have believed it.

APPLEBOME: That's what happened?

VIDA: And we had to hide our food, cleverly, had a sort of a round table like with a beautiful geranium bed on it because when the enemy came, as we called them at the time, they'd pound on the floor or whatever and if it was hollow, they'd dig out what you had there. And we learned quite a bit about camouflage and hiding things

APPLEBOME: And which army is it you referred to as the enemy?

VIDA: Well, it was the Roumanians that invaded us and I keep saying they had to do it, they were made to do it, and the Czechoslovakians came in and with them it was really great. They said that if a man even as mentions a word that should not be spoken in front of ladies, regardless of little children, they would be tried by the Hungarians and not by them court martialled. So you see it was pretty rough. But we had fun too.

APPLEBOME: What were some of things that were fun?

VIDA: Well, for one thing, we made a game out of everything, stripping feathers was the one we'd blow and off it would go, and the corn husking and it was great to sleep on that corn silk and going out, well I liked to pick wild flowers, I still do, but got spanked for that because Grandmother said, "God put that there for people to enjoy and you're not supposed to pick it and they die when you bring them in." which was true.

And we didn't have much meat, but then we didn't think you should anyway. If somebody slaughtered, well, pork we had, and chicken, and duck, and rabbits, and pigeons, and pheasants, which we had a lot of and a lot of fruits and vegetables. Our eating habits were different from what we have her in this country.

APPLEBOME: And your father had immigrated to the United States, when?

VIDA: Well, the second time, I don't know the first time when he came out.

APPLEBOME: The first time you were just a young child?

VIDA: I was two years old so it had to be--I was born in 1911, so and then when the War broke out, we didn't know if he was alive and he didn't know if we were alive. And then when the War was over, and before that too, we would get packages, and, oh, little things like, medication and one and ribbon for my hair, and then my high-button shoes that I got in trouble with because mother said if I lose the button you couldn't replace it, and I didn't have any place to put it, and it was my turn to jump a rope, so, I had no pockets 'cause I was a tomboy. I'd climb trees and I'd rip my clothes so mother said, "No pockets," and I was afraid I'd lose the

button so I stuck it in my nose and that got me into an awful lot of trouble, I still have (she laughs) my face swelled up till it was wide with it.

APPLEBOME: And you couldn't get the button out of your nose?

VIDA: No, they had to take me on horseback to a nearby town and the doctor thought it was a bean. What a surprise, By then I had my nose pretty well ripped up, I never did that again.

APPLEBOME: Good.

VIDA: So we had the Sunday dresses, which incidentally, its a thought I'll never shake, and it's not a happy one. When War broke out iron was needed. The first thing they asked for were the fences and people even had iron fences around their family cemetery plots, and around the cemetery. They took that. What hurt was when they asked for the church bells and when that came down they had to use ropes, no more chains left, and it cracked the concrete or the structure in front, I remember that. And there was a farewell service in church and I was with the rest of them in my white Sunday dress, we, they all scrubbed the oxen, we had white oxen with the big horns, harnessed in those horrible big, wooden yokes, and we had garlands of flowers on the animals, and it was very sad. There was no church bell to

ring. I was supposed to recite a poem and I couldn't, I was so emotionally upset and I said, "My stomach hurts," and I kept going like that and somebody said, "Well, your stomach is down further," (she laughs). At any rate, I had to be taken out of the procession. So, then when they, the packages started coming and as I said, the letter seemed to have disappeared because there generally was money in it, that he did send money in, in the packages.

APPLEBOME: He was in the United States working?

VIDA: Yes.

APPLEBOME: Do you know where he was working?

VIDA: Amboy was it there, Amboy, Perth Amboy, around there and then he, I guess, thought he could better himself and went to Ohio and that's where he lived when mother and I came out.

APPLEBOME: What had you heard about the United States before coming over?

VIDA: Well, things that I resented, for instance they said that the poor people, uh, celebrated Chicken Day and the rich people

celebrated Turkey Day and one of the favorite "musts" at the dinner table on this Chicken and Turkey Day was what they called a "pumpkin pie" which was like a cake and to us, pumpkins were for pigs and we thought, "How awful, those poor American children have to eat pig food."

APPLEBOME: That's very funny.

VIDA: And what a nice surprise to find that it was Thanksgiving Day not Turkey Day and that pumpkin pie is pretty darn good. I like it.

APPLEBOME: Good, me too. so, your father had written to you and your mother, and did he send money for you to come over?

VIDA: He sent passage, you might say from door to door. We had everything paid for. And you know, they tell you there's no graft. There was. All the way through we were told that three comes after two but we found out that ninety-eight come after three if you had twenty dollar bills to hand around, which we didn't have. So, we went to, oh, different places, walked with a big stick because there were dogs around and finally wound up in Budapest, not "pest" it's "pesht"

APPLEBOME: What do you remember about leaving your village,

what did you take with you?

VIDA: Ah, mother had a good s-zed reed basket and I had a smaller one and then we had, I think it was like oilcloth if I remember right, for our body clothes and a change of clothes to come with, and mother and I walked, we already sent the, our luggage, I'd say, the night before and we walked.

APPLEBOME: How come your grandparents didn't come with you?

VIDA: Well, they were more patriotic than we were and my grandfather came out but went back. Most of them do, they come out and make the money and go back. So, I am an American by choice and so are my parents.

APPLEBOME: What did the, what was the reaction of children, of your friends, to your leaving?

VIDA: Well, they thought we'd come back as soon as we had the money and I've never been back and I don't intend to.

APPLEBOME: Okay, then, so then tell me about the travels leaving your country.

VIDA: Well, first we went by train and we zigzagged from one country to another. They would, it was, they didn't charge us extra but we had to go back and forth, here and there, and finally we wound up in London, England and they said we'd get passage from there but I don't think we did. But it was interesting, and Budapest was very interesting, I'd never dreamed I'd see the day to go to Budapest, that was great. And you learned a lot that you don't get out of books. Actually, (someone whispers off-mike) oh mother, my husband loves this story. We had whistles on the train and we just took, you just take it for granted, its the same in every country. Well, we got to England and we had to walk from one railroad station to another and carry your own baggage. My mother had a big one and a sling on her shoulders and I had the same thing, she had a prayer book in that one, by the way too, and mother was very devout, we're Greek Catholics, and making the sign of the cross. We got to England and lo and behold, the trains had bells instead of whistles (she laughs). Well, poor mother was trying to keep up with the group and she'd put her bundles down and make the sign of the cross and no time to kneel down or anything, and finally she says, "Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, please forgive me but I can't keep this up." (She laughs.) And some lady laughed at mother and mother refused to accept her apology, even in the note, she just wouldn't talk to her anymore because she laughed at her. Of course, that lady knew about the bells on the train and we didn't.

APPLEBOME: And your mother was thinking they were church bells?

VIDA: That's right, and over there, if the church bell would ring, even the people who did not go to church would bow their head and fold their hands. And I don't know if you knew, there were different ways of ringing a bell. You knew if it was a disaster, you knew if somebody died, and well, a storm or anything, you knew, so you didn't need to have it. But if somebody died, they seldom had anything if a child was born unless it belonged to some royalty or something which was very seldom announced. And we didn't have a newspaper, in fact the only paper we knew was brown paper, the paper we made the Easter lilies for the church and the newspaper which we rarely saw. We had a town crier to give us the news, beat the drum and come down the street in the village every so far and read off all the news and everybody would come out to the gate and listen. So, when they told us that in America, they don't paint the walls or whitewash them, we thought, "How awful, what do they do, put nails in there and hang a newspaper on there, it must be a terrible way to live and very unsanitary" (she laughs).

APPLEBOME: Okay, so you were in England, what port did you finally leave from?

VIDA: I really don't know, it's some place nearby and I can't

recall, I think we went by a small boat first and boarded the Beringaria.

APPLEBOME: That was the name of the ship?

VIDA: Yes, Cunard Lines and I told my husband that we broke the record and he wouldn't believe me until we went to see the Queen Mary and I said, "There you are, five and half days." I know because I fell out of the bunk when they made, we had a storm and then when finally they speeded up and I trying to get out of the bunk, that's how I, I didn't get hurt though, so, it was okay.

APPLEBOME: But the boat made it over in five and half days?

VIDA: Five, right, you check that out.

APPLEBOME: That was a very fast ship.

VIDA: You bet.

APPLEBOME: Did you travel steerage?

VIDA: Uh, we had the improved second class. But I got around to first class and I got oranges and I bit into it just the way it was, I've

never seen one before and I didn't like chocolate and that didn't go over, no. (Someone speaks off-mike.) Your favorite story? Dare I?

APPLEBOME: Go ahead.

VIDA: We had pictures in our house. Everybody had religious pictures. One was of the Virgin Mary and according to, or according to our opinion, the kids, Virgin Mary was the watch lady so that if it was too cold for us to go to church, why we did anything bad, she'd be looking at the person who started it. and we believed that and the other picture was Heaven and Hell. And uh, all the devils were black which I think is terrible, now, except Lucifer, he was the one with the pitchfork, he was red and so was his pitchfork. Anyway, to make the story short, in school, we learned about Africa and the Ebony Man, we called it, black. Well, we were told they were black as coal, so we didn't know what it was like and we didn't really believe it because Grandma used to say, "Get that dog out of here, he's got fleas as big as a horse." So, we thought that wasn't true and this wouldn't be. So, picture me, on board the big ship, tension and seasickness, mother got awfully sick and they had to call the doctor. Mother wouldn't let me go on board because she was sure if anybody would fall overboard, it would be me, because I was climbing things. Well, the doctor came and gave her something and he says, "It's all right honey, she'll sleep about five hours, if you want o go and play, you go ahead." My

friends were always at the door, knocking, so I waited until she was really sound asleep and I stormed up the stairs. I get half way up and there's the blackest man I have ever seen in my life up to this day and he was like this. I went back to the cabin and knelt down and prayed like you wouldn't believe, (she laughs) cause I was sure he was going to get me because I was bad.

APPLEBOME: That was the first black person you had ever seen?

VIDA; That's right, we had just heard about it. Also, we heard that in America, this is in school, there was no royalty, the leader of the country was chosen by the people, which I thought was great and he didn't wear a crown and neither did his wife. So, picture my confusion when I saw the Statue of Liberty. Why? Why the crown? Well, mother answered my questions. I was always a question box to the point where my husband's embarrassed to walk with me when we go places. And, uh, then I looked up, oh when they said, "Land, and there's the Statue of Liberty," I said to mother, "What does she mean?" And mother just hugged me and said, "That means America." And I said, "Well, why is she holding the torch in her hand?" And mother said, "To light the way for people like us." And me being the question box, I said, "How can she lead the way or guide us when she's glued," I used the word glued, "To that stone and she can't even move her arm?" Well, some people laughed but my mother didn't laugh, she just

hugged me and she didn't think my question was silly either. That's what prompted me to write that poem.

APPLEBOME: Well, maybe we'll read the poem at the end.

VIDA: Alright. So, we got to America--

APPLEBOME: Yeah, but let's talk a little more about the boat trip, you said there were other children you had met and you were playing with?

VIDA: Yes, we were allowed to go on board and the man had a whip with a ribbon on it and he flashed it around, I guess to make us exercise I believe. And then someone brought us slices of lemon, they said it would help you not get sick as you might get otherwise. And there were many nations on board and the first class of course, that was fancy. Mother never got to see it, I did, I saw it daily I think. And then the third class, they had oilcloth on the table and they were the noisiest spot and they were all served whatever part of the chicken or fish it was. Well, we were first served "family style" and the food was very good and us kids were allowed to go on board when they were catching fish for our dinner and they had out, what would you call them, they shot it out like an arrow out of a machine deal and--

APPLEBOME: Like a harpoon?

VIDA: Yes, I couldn't think of the word, slices like that
and it was really good.

APPLEBOME: What were some of the other foods they would serve?

VIDA: Well, cheese, was one, which especially the Italian
children went for. I went for the bread because to
us white bread was like cake.

APPLEBOME: Had you ever seen children from other countries?

VIDA: The Czechoslovakian girls with acres of petticoats
would come in at harvest time and work, that's about the only time,
harvesting the grain and also the flax. Flax was one of the things that
grew very, very tall and we didn't grow much lin. You know the difference?

APPLEBOME: No, not really.

VIDA: It's really a flax family but the lin is your fine
linens and it's very short, and about so high, I'd say, three feet maybe,
and the flax out our way in the swamp area, it grew seven, eight feet tall,

I believe, and you soak it in mud for awhile and then take it out, spread it and dry it and then you have a machine like a saw-horse, would you say? With this handle on it, you'd chop it up and then you have a wire, uh, like a frame with wires in it, some larger, I mean, I don't mean they were mixed up, some boards had little ones and some longer and some closer together.

APPLEBOME: And what was the story about falling out of the bunk on the boat?

VIDA: Well, they slowed down, I guess because of the storm or that's what we were told and then I guess, several ships were out to break the record and when they started going in a commotion and a brrrr of noise, I tried to climb out of the bunk, several kids did that. But I hung on pretty good, I didn't get hurt or anything. It's just that I got mad at my husband when he wouldn't believe that we broke the record and I says, "Now look for the passenger list and you'll see I'm on it."

APPLEBOME: This is the end of side one of tape one of the interview with Mrs. Anna Vida.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

APPLEBOME: This is side two of tape one of the interview with Mrs. Anna Vida. This is Interview Number 148. Okay, Mrs. Vida, can we talk now about when the boat gets to the United States?

VIDA: Alright, well, I think I told you about seeing the Statue of Liberty, the first time. And we studied about islands in school but Ellis Island didn't look anything like I pictured it to be, and up to this day and I don't think through the rest of my life I'll ever see a group of people so bewildered, so frightened, so seemingly lost, as our was. For one thing, there's, your imagination runs away with you. We were told, if you couldn't read, we knew how to read, but we were afraid they'd ask us to read something in English and we wouldn't know how to pronounce it. Then, eyes were one of the things that they had, of course, other ailments too, and we had every shot that they could even dream up of, I guess. And then there was the big problem of head lice and clothes were sterilized and the, uh, then we went to one gate where they had the prettiest red, white and blue caps and I wanted a blue one so bad and they gave me a white one and I couldn't get through to them what I wanted, but later on we found out that white was you're all right. And the others had to cleaned up, they sold combs with the finest of teeth and then they--

APPLEBOME: You lost me for a second. You were given a hat to

indicate how you had done in an examination?

VIDA: That's right, on your head lice, and I don't think there was any on the body lice, I think we all had white gowns. And, uh, they, I think the management of the, well they, we weren't tourists, immigrants, had a lot to learn too. For instance, for modesty's sake, I guess, they tried to separate, the little boys had to be with the men and the little girls after the age of five. You have no idea what a terrifying experience it is for a child to be separated from the mother. I think they learned a lot on that. So, then when we, the big boat, the ship--first class got right off, but the rest of us had to stay, and then I don't think we were numbered or anything but so many people were led on smaller boats and we could see Ellis Island and I thought, "Well, I must be mistaken, it doesn't look anything like we learned about in school." But when we started getting off, I was sure Ellis Island would sink to the bottom of the ocean and I was hoping I'd be in the middle and somehow be protected (she laughs). And over there the echo of all those different languages, and the fright. Do you know, voices rise with fright? It gets shrill and that building seemed it was bigger inside than out. It was a frightening thing so I don't remember how many or how long we stayed there and then we were--

APPLEBOME: Was your mother frightened, do you think?

VIDA: She most certainly was.

APPLEBOME: How did you know?

VIDA: Well, a child can tell. Still in all, I think every child born feels secure so long as mother's hand is there.

APPLEBOME: So, you weren't so frightened then?

VIDA: Well, I felt there were many others in the same boat, you might say, and if they're going to make it, we will, and if we don't, we'll sink, we'll rise together, that's all.

APPLEBOME: There was a medical examination, and what else?

VIDA: The eye examination, medical examination and I had a problem because our church was all stone and, uh, it was, that picks up the cold and in the winter children couldn't go. By that time, putting several young children together and, you know, what could happen. So they got a teenaged girl to come in and she had some strange ideas. One was to scrape the enamel off your fingernails which I had and I was the first one to get my eyelashes cut off all the way to where it pinched and it would stick together and I had an eye problem. So, mother was afraid they'd deport me

and then there was the choice, "Are you going too, shall I go back with you if they send you, or what shall we do?" But thank God it turned out that way. I passed the test and so did mother. And then we were--

APPLEBOME: So you were both on the Island for less than a day?

VIDA: I can't remember that. There's just so much
confusion by then and--

APPLEBOME: Do you remember any of the questions they asked?

VIDA: Well, "Did you have this sickness and that sickness?"
And they had interpreters, some were fair and some weren't. We had
interpreters and most of them were Travelers Aid. Let me tell you, they're
wonderful. They helped us out every way they could and reassured us, which
we needed very badly. Especially, like when we were getting off of Ellis
Island, we had all sorts of tags on us, uh, now that I think of it, we must
have looked like marked down merchandise in Gimbel's department store or
something. "Where are you going, who's waiting for you?" and all that and
then we were put in groups and out group was going to the Erie Railroad
Station in Jersey City. Well, that was a disappointment because every
country you went to, it seemed one railroad station would outshine the other
in cleanliness and beauty and well, if you've been to Erie Railroad Station,

you know what it was like. And we got on the train and you were so afraid you'd fall asleep, you won't hear the station or they'll forget to call you, what will you do? Our passage was paid even to a taxi to where Daddy was boarding at the time. So, we got on at night, I think, and got to Warren, Ohio in the morning and mother was really in bad shape and I tried to cheer her up. She'd say, "Supposing your father isn't there?" supposing this, supposing that. Oh by the way, I never even saw a picture of my father. We sent a picture which took all the money I guess. So picture this, we look down the platform, there weren't many people there, and I saw this nice looking man in a grey suit and spats, you know what spats are?

APPLEBOME: Yes I do.

VIDA: And a grey hat and he was twirling a cane like, (she laughs) something like Charlie Chaplin, definitely nervous, and I said to mother, "Look at that nice man, I hope my daddy looks something like that." Minute or two and we were in each other's arms, it was my daddy and I was the proudest little girl in the whole wide world to have a daddy like that. So, he hired a taxi, put our luggage in and we went to a house where he boarded and there were seven men boarding there, that was the time when workers were needed, you know. I still believe that's what built America. And the lady and the man let Mother and Dad have a bedroom, instead of sleeping in a bunk with the rest of the men, down in the basement, and I had

a sleeping porch. There was bathroom inside, oh boy, what a let down when we had to leave as soon as we could afford to and there was no bathrooms indoors, and we had a wooden sidewalk, and it was pretty tough. Daddy made eighteen cents an hour and worked three days a week.

APPLEBOME: And what kind of work was it that he did?

VIDA: Steel worker, laborer. laborer, yep.

APPLEBOME: And did your mother find work?

VIDA: No, mother was ailing in Europe and she was that way here, too, up to her last days, and she passed away in 1963. And nobody was, everybody was poor, so we were just, we didn't feel all that poor, so--

APPLEBOME: Tell me what life was like then.

VIDA: In America?

APPLEBOME: In Warren, did you go to school?

VIDA: Yes, we arrived in August, and September school started and at that time hygiene was stressed. They look at your fingernails and

the back of your ears to see if it was clean and had your teeth brushed and they, our first lesson was to learn, yes and no, and thank you and please. None of could pronounce -th- so it was "tankyou". And then we learned the numbers.

APPLEBOME: Were there other Hungarian children?

VIDA: No, I was the only one in our class and only one Greek. We had no one to communicate with while the others were really having a ball. So that was very tough on me.

APPLEBOME: Why, what would the other children do to you?

VIDA: Well. they just thought you're dumb, you can't communicate with everybody, any body. And then another thing that was good and bad was they put us in kindergarten for the language and music and first grade and then second grade to read and write and spell. I got a library card, I still loved pictures and they had these stereo-viewmaster deals at that time, but they were like postcards, too and you see one, and that was great. And I really worked hard and my kindergarten teacher, at the age of ten, that hurts, was very nice. She'd come to the house and then mother, and I signed up for learning the English language, I say American language, in night school. And we went three or four nights a week, and this precious

teacher would come to the house and teach us, she was, boy she sure deserved to go to heaven.

APPLEBOME: Your father had learned English already?

VIDA: Uh, as much as he could but he never was very good at it even this way because when you're with people of your own nationality you automatically speak it. I love the Hungarian language, I don't get a chance, but I interpret it in courts so that isn't too bad. and I still love it.

APPLEBOME: Do you think your mother was pleased to have come over?

VIDA: Oh, yes indeed, yes indeed. I think my parents were more American than the ones here. That's why on my letter, if they have that, do they?

APPLEBOME: Yes.

VIDA: When I said, "Has anyone ever asked you if you wanted to be an American? If not, I wish they would, because its the grandest feeling in the whole world to honestly say, 'you bet your life I do'" So,

then I went to, I got married in 1930. That meant I didn't follow my parents in citizenship so I had to work for mine, of course, they did too, both of them were citizens before I was. I got mine in 1949, I think. And well, I still say, "It's the greatest country in the world," and using my husband's quote, "Where but in the United States can you travel 3,000 miles without a passport? Nowhere."

APPLEBOME: Do you want to read the poem for us, that you've written?

VIDA: Alright.

APPLEBOME: I have a copy of it for you.

VIDA: Isn't this it too, yes.

APPLEBOME: Well, you've got the original.

VIDA: No, the original I keep for a souvenir because on the top I put, "Is this good enough to publish?" (She laughs.) All right?

APPLEBOME: Go ahead, give the name of the poem.

VIDA: I call it, the title, "I Am Miss Liberty"
 I hold aloft a mighty torch
 With a flame that cannot ot leap
And my feet are anchored to a pedestal
 With praises hard to keep

 I try to shelter you from harm
 And to keep you safe and warm
While I stand guard under the open sky
 Facing every kind of storm

 I do the best I can for you
 So, please don't ask for more
 Than I can give all the others
 Who come to our shore

 But hang onto all your beautiful dreams
 Work hard and make them come true
 The stand up on your own two feet
 And make me proud of you.

VIDA: And by the way, that's how I used to write my name, the
A, but I want to look like the rest of the americans, writing included, so I
started the other way, but anything I'll write, and I have so many requests,
I'll sign my name that way but otherwise my handwriting is American.

APPLEBOME: Okay, that was very good, thank you very much.

VIDA: You're very welcome, the pleasure is all mine. You
made me feel at ease so my butterflies are--

APPLEBOME: Good, okay. This is then end of side two of tape one

of the interview with Mrs. Anna Vida. This is the end of Interview Number 148.