

KECK-75

IDA (CHAYA) SCHOENBAUM HANENBAUM

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AGE 12 (AS RECORDED IN THE INTERVIEW)

PASSAGE ON "THE AQUITANIA"

DANE: This is Debby Dane and I'm speaking with Ida Hanenbaum on Wednesday, November 20, 1985. We are beginning the interview at 4:35. We're about to interview Ida Hanenbaum about her immigration experience from Poland in 1932. She was twelve years old. Mrs. Hanenbaum, if you would tell me what day you were born and what town you were born in?

HANENBAUM: I was born April 18, 1912. I was born in a very small town called Provit.

DANE: Do you know how that's spelled?

HANENBAUM: P-O-V-I-T. Closest I can get to it.

DANE: And that was in Poland?

HANENBAUM: Poland.

DANE: Was it a large town, a small village?

HANENBAUM: Very small village.

DANE: And what did people do for a living there? Was it a shetel?

HANENBAUM: Well, primarily agriculture. They raised their own food products. There was a little store that you went in and bought certain things like materials and things of that sort. But you didn't go into a store and buy a pair of shoes. The shoemaker made those shoes. Or if you needed a knife in the house the blacksmith made you a knife. And if you lost it you were without a knife until he made another one.

DANE: And would he travel around?

HANENBAUM: No, no, you just went into this place and asked him that you needed a knife. And that was it.

DANE: And clothes? Were there tailors that would come to your house or were there stores that you could buy clothes?

HANENBAUM: Well, most of them, most of them knew how to sew for themselves and made their own clothes. In the large towns you had bought clothes and bought things, but in the smaller towns it was primarily your own.

DANE: And your father, was he employed in one of the shops or how did he make a living, do you remember?

HANENBAUM: Well, as it happens, primarily, my father was what you'd call, I don't know what you'd call him in English.

DANE: What is it in Yiddish?

HANENBAUM: He dealt with lumber. He would go into the woods when they cut down the trees he would evaluate them. And, ah, then sent it on wherever it was. But he would evaluate whether this was a good tree, or whether it was good lumber or bad lumber,

things of that sort. But that was his work.

DANE: And then they would go off and make planks out of them?

HANENBAUM: Yeah, yeah.

DANE: Huh, that's amazing. And your mother, did she . . .

HANENBAUM: My mother had a little store. She was more or less the worker along that way. She had a store. She traded really. It wasn't really a store either. It was a trade. They'd give her some grain, she'd give them some material and things of that sort.

DANE: What would she have? Thimbles and mostly fabrics or just about anything?

HANENBAUM: Well, I can't remember to the extent what she did have there. I know at one point I remember we had a liquor store. But with the other things that was traded, I don't know just exactly whether she had everything or just certain parts and they made do, whatever they were able to get.

DANE: Uh-huh. Did you work in the store also?

HANENBAUM: Who me? No, I was too little.

DANE: Did you go to school there?

HANENBAUM: As it happens, I had one year of schooling there because I was born, I was there during the First World War so there was no schooling. So I, right after the war I went to the next town and had a year of schooling and that was it. And then we came here.

HANENBAUM: Was that, did you go to school with Poles or was it Yiddish

training, Hebrew?

HANENBAUM: It was born. My mother had a teacher, sort of a live-in teacher. The Jewish training was gotten whereby the Jewish people got together and they brought somebody in and they paid them and he did the teaching. And then the other was in the school system. But, as I say, I only had one year of it.

DANE: Yeah. I heard from other people that the boys got educations but the girls didn't. Was that the same?

HANENBAUM: That's true. But in those days they were getting away from that, too. It was really days that were before that that the most important thing was for the boy to get the education and the girls, now, in my mother's day she got enough education to write a letter or read the Bible or whatever and that was the extent of her schooling. But they were getting away from that, beginning to get away from it in my time.

DANE: Oh, I see, I see. Um, did you speak Polish also?

HANENBAUM: I used to speak Polish and Russian very fluently but I've forgotten it.

DANE: So Polish, Russian and Yiddish?

HANENBAUM: And Hebrew.

DANE: And Hebrew. Holy cow. Wow, that's amazing.

HANENBAUM: But it was without schooling. It was just learned by word of mouth. And, of course, my Hebrew I got here. I graduated college, Hebrew college here.

DANE: Oh, I see. Russian, so you, was your village pretty near the Russian

border?

HANENBAUM: Russian-Polish border. And during the war we could go to sleep and we were in Russia and wake up and we were in Poland, or vice versa. It kept going back and forth.

DANE: Do you remember then if, you sound like you were in one of the fighting zones. Do you remember battles or seeing soldiers?

HANENBAUM: Soldiers I remember, I mean no actual battles. But there were soldiers and there were also the renegades, as they were called. The name for them was "balachatus." [ph] They were renegades. They would come behind the army and just loot. And, uh, we, my oldest brother was now dead, too, faced the firing squad a couple of times because they came in, oh, yeah, this happened when America used to send like clothing and food and stuff like that. And our house was the distributing point. And they came in. They wanted to take some material and my mother tried to stop them. They pointed the gun, my brother ran in, actually it was a rifle, it wasn't a gun. And he came in and stood in front of my mother and they just about shot him. When my mother pushed him away and begged them off she gave them what they wanted and they left.

DANE: Oh, my.

HANENBAUM: Oh, there were all kinds of experiences. There's no question about that. I remember as a child standing there and looking out the window and they had taken a pregnant woman and tied her to a horse's tail and they just dragged her through. Whatever happened to her I never did find out.

DANE: And these, again, were renegades?

HANENBAUM: The renegades.

DANE: The Polish troops or the Russian troops, were they good to you,
or . . .

HANENBAUM: Oh, we had no, as far as the troops themselves are concerned,
there was no actual bombing in our particular town so there
was no actual contact with the soldiers themselves. As I
said, all of our contacts were with the leftovers.

DANE: Would you ever have to put them up? Would they insist on staying at
your house?

HANENBAUM: Well, one time they, well, this was actually part of the
government. They took over. We had like a double house with
a walkway through it. And the one house belonged to a cousin
of mine and the other house we lived in. And they took over
one half of the house as a headquarters but that's as far as
it went.

DANE: I heard someone say, this was the Germans who actually came into a
Polish town, occupied, and had these very strict cleaning
regulations. They made everyone clean their house, they made
everyone take baths every single day, I mean, very strict.

HANENBAUM: Was that during the First World War or Second World War?

DANE: First World War.

HANENBAUM: We had no contact with any of the Germans so I wouldn't know.
All our contact was either Russian or Polish.

DANE: And as far as the structure of the town, were there peasants and then
merchants and then government? I mean, you were young.

HANENBAUM: I wouldn't remember just exactly how the town was ruled. That I do not remember, but there were peasants and there were people who bought from the peasants, things of that sort, but as far as the rule of the town is concerned I couldn't tell you because I don't know.

DANE: When it was, after the war was over, did you have any relatives in this country?

HANENBAUM: Yes. My mother's side of the family were all here. And that's why we came here. Uh, two years before we came in '21 a sister and a brother of mine came before us. And then we came in '23. My brother and my mother and father and I.

DANE: What did they write back and tell you about America? Were they descriptive about what life was like here?

HANENBAUM: That I wouldn't know because the correspondence was between my mother and her sister and whatever other relatives we had. But, uh, I was never interested in reading what the letters were, so I really couldn't tell you that. But all I know is that my mother wanted to come here because of the family being here.

DANE: Why is it that they came over? Did you ever know?

HANENBAUM: No. They were here a long time before we were.

DANE: Really. Before the war?

HANENBAUM: Yeah.

DANE: And your mother was the motivator? She said, "Let's go, let's go."

HANENBAUM: Yeah, yeah.

DANE: Did you, did you and your brother ever talk about what you thought America was going to be like?

HANENBAUM: Oh, we had all kinds of visions and dreams and what we thought was going to be. The streets were going to be paved with gold. The usual, what do you call it, but we found out differently.

DANE: Did you ever read about, I don't know if in your school you had American literature, but someone else was just saying today about American Indians, they were real excited to come over and see the Indians.

HANENBAUM: Well, they may have, they may have, as I say, in the one year of schooling I couldn't have gotten much of that, much of that, so I don't know. I mean, our thoughts were just to get here because of family.

DANE: So there wasn't persecution. It wasn't because of poverty.

HANENBAUM: Well, there was poverty at one time. One time we didn't have any bread for a whole month until some of these peasants would trade my mother for a little something or other for some of the wheat and then we'd get, then this oldest brother of mine was living at that time in a larger city, a large city, and he sent us a couple loaves of bread. But otherwise, I mean, we just, there were certain greens we would pick in the fields and just cook it and eat it.

DANE: This was during the war.

HANENBAUM: Yeah, certain amount of poverty of it.

DANE: And persecution, was that a problem?

HANENBAUM: Not in our particular town. Now, it may have been through the other cities or towns, but in our particular town we didn't see it, so.

DANE: Were you sponsored by your sisters as far as tickets and?

HANENBAUM: Well, actually, in those days they had quotas. They were certain times when parents could come to children. There were other times children could come to parents. Sisters to brother, and so on. And our quota was when a family could come to children. And my brother, was the one that made out all the papers, but actually he was backed, he didn't have anything, so he was backed by my aunt and her family. So . . .

DANE: And they sent you, and he sent you . . .

HANENBAUM: Sent us the tickets. The tickets came from him. And my brother and I being under age at the time, we automatically came with my parents.

DANE: Oh, that's great. Do you remember when it was time to pack up your house and . . .

HANENBAUM: Oh, yeah. Yeah. We packed up everything on the horse and wagon.

DANE: Furniture and everything?

HANENBAUM: Well, no. We didn't bring any furniture or anything like that, just our clothes and some feather beds that I still have downstairs. And . . .

DANE: You're kidding.

HANENBAUM: Yeah. And Dad came along and I still, I still can see, we had a very good relationship with the peasants and all the people there and I can still see them running after us as we were riding out on the horse and wagon they were running after the wagon. "Farewell."

DANE: Were you sad?

HANENBAUM: I was too young to be sad about anything like that.

DANE: And your dad, did he want to go to America?

HANENBAUM: I don't think my dad wanted so much but, as my mother, but he definitely wanted to go because he still left relatives there, that were killed during the second World War.

DANE: So you went off on a horse drawn wagon?

HANENBAUM: Well, we left the town until we got to Cherbourg, wherever it was that we took a train, and we got, from the train we got to Cherbourg where, and that's where we got on the boat.

DANE: Had you ever been out of your town before?

HANENBAUM: I had been out to other cities in Poland, but I mean not out of the country or anything like that.

DANE: Was this all new for you to see Cherbourg and a big city?

HANENBAUM: The first time I saw a black man I got scared to death and hugged my father. Couldn't understand what was wrong with the man until he finally sat there and explained it to me that there are people that are dark skinned. I was scared to

death. The porter was the first colored person that I saw. He had that red cap. Black as the ace of spades. And I just shuddered because I thought something was wrong with the man.

DANE: And your brother, did he think this was?

HANENBAUM: No, he didn't. I don't know whether he saw him at that time or not. I may have just been there with my father and spotted him or something. I don't remember his saying or doing anything so he might not have been there at the moment.

DANE: Had you brought food for the boat over?

HANENBAUM: No, you got food on the boat. We came in style. We didn't come, we didn't come in steerage. We had a cabin. We were the first crossing on the Aquatania. So we already, it only took us five-and-a-half days.

DANE: That's fast. Even today that's fast. Were you impressed with this boat?

HANENBAUM: Oh, we had a ball. My brother and I had a ball. We carried on. Like people, so we just went around and enjoyed ourselves.

DANE: Did you play games on the boat?

HANENBAUM: Some. I mean, talked to other kids and when, when my poor ball went overboard I wanted to go after it. (they laugh)

DANE: Were there people traveling in steerage on the Aquatania?

HANENBAUM: I don't know. I wouldn't know.

DANE: I wonder if it was also transporting third class.

HANENBAUM: I haven't the slightest.

DANE: And food, food was delicious?

HANENBAUM: There was no problem as far as food was concerned.

DANE: And coming across, you arrived in New York five-and-a-half days later.
What year? You left in 1923?

HANENBAUM: September of 1923.

DANE: And then you came into New York. Had you been told or had anyone
spoken about the Statue of Liberty and the harbor?

HANENBAUM: No. But it seems like people on the boat were talking about
it. And when somebody spotted it we all went to the side to
look at it.

DANE: Did it make any impression?

HANENBAUM: It did. I mean, we were trying to wonder what, I remember
asking my brother why they were making such fuss over it, but,
of course, he could never give me the answer either. So that
was that.

DANE: Did you remember, did you, because when I think of never having seen
it, it's a very funny, it's not like a common statue.

HANENBAUM: Well, that's it, that's what we were wondering. I mean, what
was there about it that everybody was running to? And then
somebody did say that that was the entrance to America. So we
accepted it as such and that was that.

DANE: Huh, huh. Then you got here and you had told me on the phone that you

weren't sure whether it was Ellis Island or not, that you came and . . .

HANENBAUM: Well, I didn't know it as such, you know, until we got there and had to go through customs and what have you. Then I knew that that's what was called Ellis Island.

DANE: Do you remember thinking, did you have medical exams?

HANENBAUM: On the boat before we were taking off, yeah.

DANE: Do you remember what they did, or what was . . .

HANENBAUM: Usual examinations. We had a funny incident. I think I mentioned it to you. (she laughs) All of our underclothes were made out of fresh-made linens and, of course, they weren't mercerized or whatever you call it, and finally somebody came out and said that if they found one spot on your underclothes you couldn't go through. They wouldn't let you off. So my mother grabbed some scissors and started snipping out and we went in there with bumps on the underwear, there were holes on it but they were clean and we went out and we came through it with the holes and all. (they laugh)

DANE: I love it. She thought the imperfections would . . .

HANENBAUM: Yeah, somebody came out and said the slightest thing on your clothes, and that did it.

DANE: It's better than being sent back.

HANENBAUM: Yeah, scissors worked very quickly.

DANE: Did you hold onto those?

HANENBAUM: No. No, we got rid of those. I guess my mother was ashamed, I guess she got rid of them real fast. She was afraid what she did.

DANE: Were you aware, you were awfully young, you were only twelve, but aware that if you didn't pass the health inspections that you'd be sent back?

HANENBAUM: No. I mean, none of that entered my mind at all. I mean all those, what you call it, worries, were my mother's. So none of that entered into it at all.

DANE: Was your brother older or younger than you?

HANENBAUM: My brother was older. I was the youngest. The baby.

DANE: On Ellis Island, do you remember what it looked like, if there were lines, or if there was a big room or a small room?

HANENBAUM: Oh, it was a great big room that we disembarked, but that's about all that I know. We didn't stay there long because we had an aunt, my father's sister lived in New York. And we went over there to visit them. And I think we were supposed to come back but we never did. And, but they, you know, I guess they investigated and all and found it was just an oversight. And they just let us stay there and then we were there about a week. Came here to New York. Down to Baltimore.

DANE: Do you remember if they, did you eat any meals on Ellis Island or spend the night?

HANENBAUM: Not that I remember it.

DANE: Some people have been telling me that they had, um, name tags from their ticket.

HANENBAUM: Name tags, yeah, we all had name tags in case of being lost. We all had nametags.

DANE: Other languages. Did you hear, was it at all strange for you to be around . . .

HANENBAUM: Naturally, I didn't understand any English. I didn't know what they were talking about. But it didn't take me long. When I came here I went to school right away and, uh, then we were put in the first grade. My brother was fourteen and I was twelve, and we're in the first grade. And, uh, I don't, in the first grade they give you drawing when you show me your hands and if your hands are clean. Teacher gave a child in the back of the room, my brother and I were sitting in the back of the room across from each other so that at least we could communicate. And she starts with us, she says, she asked us to show our hands and we didn't know what she was talking about. The teacher had gone out of the room and we didn't know. We were giving our pencils, our paper, everything we owned. Our books and everything and by that time the class was in an uproar and the teacher heard it. She came back in, she walked back, she said, "What's wrong?" And I go like this. (she shrugs) "I don't know. Kids plopped a piece of paper on my desk and off they went. (they laugh)

DANE: That's great. So how did you, did you learn English at school then, slowly or . . .

HANENBAUM: It started at school and then within a few months I was able to converse, I mean, I had an accent but I was able to. In about three, four months I was, I was talking and talking pretty clearly.

DANE: Was it frustrating? Do you remember being . . .

HANENBAUM: Oh, very frustrating. You tried to talk to somebody who was near you and no go. So it's quite frustrating. But as I say, it didn't take too long. I can understand that some of these older people, I can remember my mother. She spoke very little English, even until the day she died. And we had a neighbor next door who was not Jewish, couldn't speak Jewish. So they did a great amount of conversing by showing. She's talking about a pillow, so she'd go in the house and show her a pillow or, uh, talk about an iron, she'd go in the house and get the iron to show her. I think that's, but they got across.

DANE: Huh. Did your mom, was she glad to get here and be here?

HANENBAUM: Oh, yeah. Yeah. She was, because of her family being here. So she was quite satisfied. Of course, we had very little but, uh, we managed. No government grants or anything of that sort. We just managed on our own. If I had to go to school and I didn't have a nickel carfare I walked. And, uh, there was no problem with it.

DANE: And your dad, was he able to find work?

HANENBAUM: My dad worked here. He was, uh, a cap cutter, you know, the men's caps that they wear, and they're cut into sections. He used to cut those and, whoever, the manufacturer made them up.

DANE: He was able to get a job.

HANENBAUM: Yeah. And then later on we had a little grocery store, quite a few years later. And that was that.

DANE: When you were little and you were learning English and being frustrated, did any of the kids treat you as a foreigner? I mean, were you accepted pretty well, or . . .

HANENBAUM: No. They didn't treat us, treat us any differently than, uh, the only thing was, when we first came here a cousin of mine said to me, "If you run, policeman is going to get you. Because if you're running, you're running away from something. At the time, I walked, I didn't run.

DANE: It worked.

HANENBAUM: Until I found out differently.

DANE: Did your, what other tips did your cousin give you? Did he . . .

HANENBAUM: Not too much really. I mean, they sort of took us in and we'd be with them and whenever they'd, uh, it was a treat to go to my aunt's for a day or something, something of that sort. And that's as far as it goes. I mean, we just, just automatically integrated.

DANE: Huh. And they had, the cousins, were they born here?

HANENBAUM: Some of them were.

DANE: And did they have any helpful hints about, some people I've been talking to, was your name Ida in Poland?

HANENBAUM: No.

DANE: What did they call you?

HANENBAUM: They called me by my Jewish name, Chaya.

DANE: Chaya. And when you got here . . .

HANENBAUM: It became Ida. The, the Ida, the meaning of Ida is life, and Chaya in Hebrew is life.

DANE: Oh, that's nice.

HANENBAUM: So that's what it is.

DANE: How did it, who, whose idea was it to give you Ida? Do you remember how that happened?

HANENBAUM: A cousin of mine took me to school and she signed me into school. She had to give me a name, so she gave me a name. As it happens, her name was Hiya in Hebrew and they called her Ida, so that was it. So I became Ida.

DANE: In the first year . . .

HANENBAUM: And as it happened, when I looked it up afterwards, as far as the meanings were concerned, that's what it was. So maybe hers was looked up at first and, uh, translated and put into, I don't know.

DANE: And was that that first, that September, when you went to school, is that when that happened?

HANENBAUM: Yeah.

DANE: Oh, that's great. And what was your maiden name when you . . .

HANENBAUM: Schoenbaum.

DANE: Schoenbaum. And did that stay that way, it didn't change at all? When you were in Poland . . .

HANENBAUM: Well, in Poland they called us Shamebame, so when we came here we called it Schoenbaum. It's pretty much the same.

DANE: Pretty much the same.

HANENBAUM: Yeah. And as it happens, that's a German name. How I got a German name I don't know but, uh, usually the Polish names are with a "ski" or a "vich," something of that sort, but, uh . . .

DANE: I wonder . . .

HANENBAUM: That I don't now. That comes only from my father's side of the family. How that came about, we'd have to do our family tree.

DANE: That's like a way back.

HANENBAUM: Yeah.

DANE: Um, about your cousins, oh, yeah. When you were coming over from Poland and your cousin was living here in America, something that other people have said, also, I'm wondering if it's true with you, the clothes that you wore in Poland, were they different from clothes that your cousins were wearing.

HANENBAUM: More or less, yeah. Some were different. I mean, if it's, uh, especially if it's, uh, homemade. So, when one makes it, you know, it's always a little different. And here you went to the store and you bought clothes, so, and that part. But, I mean, it wasn't that different that it showed it, you know.

I mean, I could take my clothes and go out in the street and nobody would know that I came from Europe. No.

DANE: A lot of people would say, "Oh, you've got to get rid of those clothes right away."

HANENBAUM: Some of them, now, that's a different story. I brought some clothes. I bought that, now, the, the, non-Jewish, or the peasant-type clothes. I brought some of those and used it here for shows and all but, uh, I loaned it to somebody and lost it.

DANE: And what's the, were they colorful, embroidered, or what was . . .

HANENBAUM: The, the peasant shirt, first place, they, they have the white, straight shirt and they usually have a cross stitch on it or something. And with a tight cuff and a full sleeve. This type of thing only fuller. And, uh, then the, the skirt, I remember the one that I had, it was a homemade skirt with a black, like a satin-type material, real full up here, and the pleating was not pleated. What you did was two people pleated it this way and then folded it over and tied it, and then those pleats stayed in. And they'd have colorful ribbons, green, red and all kinds of colored ribbons.

DANE: It sounds pretty.

HANENBAUM: It was pretty. So, uh, but that was a peasant outfit.

DANE: Uh-huh. How are we doing? And the shoes?

HANENBAUM: They had sandals that were made out of tree bark, soaped and soft and worked up, and then they sort of wove them together, and then they had ropes coming through around the leg. And,

uh, then there was a, a bridesmaid's headdress that I had that was also made out of bark, and then they had a whole piece of linen coming down that had colorful, uh, feathers up here.

DANE: Oh, how beautiful.

HANENBAUM: It was.

DANE: This is the end of side one, Ida Hananbaum, number 76. It's 5:06.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

DANE: This is the beginning of side two, with Ida Hananbaum, number 076 [sic]. It's 5:20. We were talking about when you were first here in school, how long did you stay in school, do you remember?

HANENBAUM: Well, the first, through high school, I made the whole thing in eight years. I had, I had to go to summer school every summer to do it, and I had to, I went to the accelerated class which made my junior high school instead of three years, two years. And every summer I had to go to summer school. That was how I made it.

DANE: But that's something you wanted to do.

HANENBAUM: Oh, sure, because I was so far behind anyway. And, uh, graduated in '32. Couldn't go to, during the Depression I had gotten into an accident and I'd gotten five hundred dollars. That was supposed to be my college money. My family couldn't afford to send me. So, that was supposed to be my college money and the, the banks closed up and that was the end of my college money. So, of course, I had to work my way through

with whatever I got.

DANE: So you went to college?

HANENBAUM: I took courses. I'm not a college graduate, but I took courses in college.

DANE: Did you go to work . . .

HANENBAUM: Of course. That's the only way I was able to go was to go to work and, uh, to go to . . .

DANE: What did you do? What kind of work?

HANENBAUM: Anything. I was, I had a nursery school, I took preparatory classes first, and I started a nursery school. And, uh, I used that, and then I was able to go on with the courses. And then, uh, later on I, during the war I didn't feel like, during the second World War I didn't feel like, everything was being rationed and, gas and car tires and things of that sort so I, uh, gave up and I became wartime help in the commercial field. I went into bookkeeping.

DANE: Into bookkeeping. Uh-huh.

HANENBAUM: Gave up teaching and went to bookkeeping. I taught Hebrew school for a while in addition to that, but that was it.

DANE: The nursery school, was it in your home or did you get, how did that work? In your neighborhood?

HANENBAUM: I had the first Hebrew nursery school in the city and that was at, uh, my synagogue, the (?) Synagogue. They, they had a Hebrew school there and they made that as part, even though it was my own, they made it as part of their curriculum. But

that was the first Hebrew nursery school in the city.

DANE: Wow. How did you get that idea? Did you like kids, or the teaching, or . . .

HANENBAUM: Well, I always liked kids and I always liked teaching, but I did not have the degree as far as teaching English was concerned, so, but I did have my Hebrew, what you call it. So when they said that they wanted to start a nursery school, that was during the time when people were working. Although in those days they didn't send anybody, any children to nursery school for the sake of, because they were going to work or anything like that, but just leisure time. And, uh, so I had that for about eight years. And then when it became, you know, with the war and all it became too hard. Everything was rationed and everything had to be, so I gave that up, and that's when I went into a commercial field.

DANE: And your Hebrew, did you get that from your parents?

HANENBAUM: From the Hebrew college.

DANE: Huh. And you learned it when you were an adult, then.

HANENBAUM: No, no. I went to Hebrew school all the way through while I was going to school. Went to Hebrew school, went to Hebrew high school, went to Hebrew college.

DANE: So they would teach you classes in English and teach, and then had Hebrew language?

HANENBAUM: Not English, not English. You went to, in English you went to English school and then you went to Hebrew school. Yeah, two different schools. After English you went to Hebrew school.

They do that now.

DANE: All the people I know that go to Hebrew school go from nine to three and then they . . .

HANENBAUM: No. The Hebrew school, the, now, you're talking about the schools that have, uh, what's the word that I mean, t uh, parochial school types . . .

DANE: Yeah, something like that.

HANENBAUM: Well, no. But they have the Hebrew schools here that are after, after school you go to Hebrew school and then go on from there to Hebrew college. From Hebrew high school to Hebrew college.

DANE: That's a lot of education.

HANENBAUM: But that's, that's done today. So, because the other, the, uh, other schools, that's a parochial type of school. Now, you have that in the, uh, you said the Yeshivas, they have the English, they get English, but they still can't get an English degree from the Yeshiva. They have to go to a college to get an English degree.

DANE: I get it. I understand. When you were here in Baltimore in the community that you lived in, was it mostly Jewish people?

HANENBAUM: Yeah.

DANE: That come from the same geographic place, or . . .

HANENBAUM: Not necessarily. No. They weren't especially people that came from the other side, but there was a Jewish neighborhood, just as this happens to be a Jewish neighborhood. This is

very much a Jewish neighborhood, but it doesn't mean that they are people who emigrated, or immigrated, I should say.

DANE: Was that comfortable for you? I mean, was it a nice feeling? Did you miss your home at first when you got here?

HANENBAUM: No. Uh-huh. No. Not as a child I didn't. I didn't miss it. I was perfectly satisfied when I came here, perfectly content with whatever I was able to get out of it. And I still am.
(they laugh)

DANE: Did you become an American citizen? Did you have to . . .

HANENBAUM: I did not become an American citizen on my own until, see, my father, we were minors, my brother and I were minors. My father never got his citizenship. He got his first papers, but never went for his second papers. So we had to wait on our own. Then my brother became a citizen, uh, when he went into the service. They made a citizen out of him. And I just, after the war was over, I became a citizen.

DANE: What year was that? In 1946 or '7?

HANENBAUM: Around that? I don't remember exactly what year it was.

DANE: Did you have to take a test? Was that still during the period of examinations and . . .

HANENBAUM: Yeah.

DANE: What made you want to, at that point, what made you want to . . .

HANENBAUM: Well, I just felt I was living here, this was where I was going to live my life and I wanted to be a citizen. So, uh, I did.

DANE: Were you, it's a leading question, but were you proud to become an American/

HANENBAUM: Very much so. And still am. In spite of that fact that there are things that make me angry I still am very proud of it.

DANE: This is another sort of funny question, since you came when you were so young I don't know if it applies, but maybe since you waited to get your citizenship, when did you first feel that you were an American and no longer . . .

HANENBAUM: Oh, I first, I felt like I was an American from the first I came here. I felt perfectly at home. And I was perfectly satisfied to be here. So, I mean, this wasn't the, it wasn't really a transitional period with me. Because I was content from the time, the first time I came here.

DANE: I remember you had said that, you thought maybe there'd be gold in the streets.

HANENBAUM: Oh, these are the remarks that are made. And we found out different when, when I didn't have my nickel carfare to go to school with and I had to walk. So I found out differently. But I was still willing to accept it. So those are things that you hear and those are things that you abide by or, either you're satisfied or not. But I happened to be content with it.

DANE: And you met your husband after the war, or during?

HANENBAUM: Well, my husband was in a concentration camp.

DANE: In Poland, or . . .

HANENBAUM: Yeah. And, uh . . .

DANE: He was from Poland, or . . .

HANENBAUM: He was from Poland. And, uh, he came here. His brother was married to a first cousin of mine. So when they brought him here they brought him to our house to meet, my mother was their aunt. And, uh, he walked, well, he came here November. We were married in April. We couldn't get him out of the house after that.

DANE: Was it love at first sight, or did you . . .

HANENBAUM: Not with me. Not with me. But I couldn't get him out of the house. So I think I got him out to get it settled. With me it wasn't love at first sight at all. In fact, my sister became, my cousin, my sister-in-law, she called me all the time, "Why don't you take that Carl out? He's sitting here moping around all the time." I said, "I don't want him." But that, I guess I changed my mind. So that settled that.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And when he came over, did he become an American citizen?

HANENBAUM: He became a citizen, yeah. But he, you know, after he got straightened out, he became a citizen after we were married. And he was an American citizen.

DANE: Uh-huh. You were telling us some funny things, just 'cos I love those names, he spoke Yiddish, you both spoke Yiddish together. And you were saying that, it was so, seems so indicative of what his personality must have been, about the Yiddish, that he would Yiddishise everything? Can you tell us some of the

names that he came up with?

HANENBAUM: Well, I told you, he's, uh, Mickey Mantle became Mickey Mendel, and Yoga Berra became Yoga Barrel, and Ed Solomon became, he's got me saying it, Ed Sullivan became Ed Solomon. And that was, things like that that he, there were many, many things that he would, uh, it would be an English word but by the time he got through with it it became an English-American word.

DANE: Did you notice, I mean, when you married him, he was also, by this time you'd grown up here, really. But here you were marrying someone who was also really from where you came from?

HANENBAUM: Well, I could understand him that much more than a fellow who would marry an American girl. I could understand his plight and his way of living much more so than somebody who married an American girl.

DANE: Uh-huh.

HANENBAUM: And, uh, because of that we had no problem. It's unfortunate that it didn't last long, but, uh . . .

DANE: The time you had it, let me thing. This is the end of side two with Ida Hanenbaum. She is number 076 [sic]. It's a half an hour later.