

KM-021

ROSE PASTELNIK BAKER

BIRTH DATE: APRIL 21, 1909

INTERVIEW DATE: JANUARY 12, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 57:30

INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE

RECORDING ENGINEER:

INTERVIEW LOCATION: SEAL BEACH, CA

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 11/1994

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 12/1994

POLAND, 1925

AGE 16

PASSAGE ON A RED STAR LINE SHIP, EXACT NAME NOT RECALLED

MOORE: Good morning. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service.

Today is the 12th of January 1994. And I'm in Seal Beach, California at the home of Rose Baker who came from Poland in 1925 when she was sixteen years old. Why don't you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth, please.

BAKER: Oh. My full name was Rose Pastelnik. My maiden name was Pastelnik.

MOORE: Could you spell that, please?

BAKER: P-A-S-T-E-L-N-I-K.

MOORE: And then your married name is?

BAKER: Baker.

MOORE: Right. And where were you born?

BAKER: In Shedlitz[ph]. That's the town, the name, near Warsaw.

MOORE: Do you know how to spell that, Shedlitz[ph]?

BAKER: No, that I don't.

MOORE: And what was the date of your birth then?

BAKER: April the 21st.

MOORE: 1920 . . . 1909.

BAKER: 1909, that's right. (she laughs)

MOORE: 1909. And what size town was your home town in Poland, do you remember?

BAKER: But it was a small town. It was about three hours away from Warsaw.

MOORE: And how many people live in that town, about?

BAKER: That I don't know.

MOORE: If you would say a ballpark figure, what would you say?

BAKER: Ten thousand, that's all.

MOORE: And what did the town, do you remember what the town looked like?

Anything about the town, do you remember?

BAKER: Well, we had, there was a butcher shop. We had a store, a grocery store, my grandmother. We stayed with my grandmother. My father was in America.

MOORE: And your grandmother was whose mother?

BAKER: My mother's mother. And we stayed with her. And my mother took care of the groceries. My grandmother was sick then, and my mother, we couldn't come to the United States because we had to wait for a quota.

MOORE: What was the major industry in that town, do you remember?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: It was an industrial town, or was it . . .

BAKER: No, no. I wouldn't know that. It was stores, and we had a grocery store that my mother took care of until we came to the United States.

MOORE: We'll get to that in a moment. What was your father's name?

BAKER: Sam.

MOORE: Sam? And what was his occupation?

BAKER: He was a carpenter. Fancy furniture he would make, carving.

MOORE: I see. Carving and furniture.

BAKER: And furniture, carve it.

MOORE: What did he look like? How would you describe him to someone who hadn't seen him?

BAKER: He was a good-looking man.

MOORE: Was he tall?

BAKER: Tall, yes. I was tall, too. I was as tall as him.

MOORE: And how tall would you say, in feet and inches?

BAKER: Five, I would say five-eight, five-nine, something like that.

MOORE: And did he have dark hair, light hair, what did he have?

BAKER: Dark hair.

MOORE: And eyes? Do you remember those?

BAKER: No. See, he died a long time ago. I was still a youngster, my father was forty-eight years old when he died.

MOORE: Oh. And he died in this country, or . . .

BAKER: Yeah, he was here, we came to him.

MOORE: I see. And what about his personality and temperament? What do you remember about that?

BAKER: Because I don't know, I didn't know him long enough. I didn't know him about five years.

MOORE: That's right.

BAKER: So he was very strict. I know he was a very strict man.

MOORE: Did your mother ever tell stories about your father, any stories?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: What about your mom, your mother? What was her name?

BAKER: My mother's name was Nettie.

MOORE: N-E . . .

BAKER: Nettie, Nettie.

MOORE: N-E-T-T-I-E?

BAKER: Yeah, Nettie.

MOORE: And what was her maiden name, do you remember?

BAKER: Her maiden name was Markinson[ph].

MOORE: Markinson[ph]?

BAKER: Markinson[ph].

MOORE: How do you spell that?

BAKER: I wouldn't know it either. (she laughs)

MOORE: Now, what was her occupation? What was her occupation?

BAKER: My mother's? Well, she was taking care of the kids, and she had a grocery store, and that's how we worked, until we came to America.

MOORE: And what about her personality and temperament? How would you describe it?

BAKER: Very nice woman, a beautiful lady. There she is. (she gestures to a photograph)

MOORE: And how would you describe her, how she looked?

BAKER: A beautiful woman. You can see the picture there. A good-looking woman. Very, she was loved by everybody.

MOORE: How tall was she?

BAKER: She was as tall as I.

MOORE: And you were about . . .

BAKER: Five-six, five-seven.

MOORE: And dark hair?

BAKER: Dark hair, yeah.

MOORE: And eyes? Did she have blue eyes?

BAKER: She had like my eyes.

MOORE: Blue eyes.

BAKER: Blue eyes.

MOORE: And is there any story about your mother that you associate with your childhood? What, do you have any stories to think about her?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: Do you ever describe her to your grandchildren?

BAKER: She took care of us. She took care of us, and she worked hard.

MOORE: A hard worker.

BAKER: Yeah. We had a pogrom, you know, that they used to come from other, the Cossacks used to come into Poland, and then we used to

hide. We had to hide, you know. And my grandmother was still alive, and then we had no food, you know. So my grandmother, so my mother said, she spoke Polish very good, and she looked like a Gentile woman. She didn't look Jewish. So she dressed herself like a peasant woman, and she went to get food. She says, "Ma, I have to go and get food for the children." We were three children. And my grandmother was afraid. She says, "I can't take your children in case they kill you."

MOORE: And you remember this, how old were you then, about?

BAKER: I was about ten years old.

MOORE: And were you frightened?

BAKER: Oh, yes. We were in the basement, hidden in the basement there, you know, we were afraid for these Cossacks, you know. They were coming in on the horses, you know. And so my mother left. She dressed herself like a peasant woman. And when she came, and she came. (she is moved).

MOORE: It was very common that people get, about these things. So she went out as a peasant woman.

BAKER: And she brought a sack of potatoes on her back.

MOORE: So she was brave.

BAKER: Yeah, she was. She brought a sack of potatoes so we should have something to eat. And she came back.

MOORE: And when she came back your grandmother was . . .

BAKER: Was happy, of course, that she got there.

MOORE: Interesting. What were the names of your brothers and sisters? How many did you have?

BAKER: My mother had two children here in the United States.

MOORE: And when you were small, how many were there?

BAKER: We were just three children.

MOORE: And what were their names? You had a brother?

BAKER: My brother was Al.

MOORE: And how old was he, in comparison in age?

BAKER: He was a year. We were a year apart.

MOORE: You and Al were a year apart.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: Then what was . . .

BAKER: My sister, she was about four years apart.

MOORE: And what was her name?

BAKER: Molly.

MOORE: Molly. Four years from Al or from you.

BAKER: Yeah, from me.

MOORE: Four years from you, okay.

BAKER: He was the middle. You know, she was the youngest I was the oldest.

MOORE: Right. And so, what about your house that you lived in under the grocery store? Did you live . . .

BAKER: We lived in back of the store.

MOORE: Yeah. And how big, how big a place . . .

BAKER: Very, very poor. Very . . .

MOORE: How big was the shop itself?

BAKER: It was a small store, and we lived in back of the store. There was no room, though. We had to see in the window on the store, and that's how we lived, because the . . .

MOORE: What did you sell? Do you remember what things you sold?

BAKER: Groceries. We had flour and potatoes. And the farmers used to bring in butter and cheese, and they used to bring it, and my grandmother used to sell also chickens. You know, they used to kill the chickens, and she would part, you know, cut parts.

MOORE: So did you keep chickens?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: And you lived in the back. And how many rooms were in the back?
I mean . . .

BAKER: Just one room.

MOORE: And you all lived together.

BAKER: All in the room. There was a kitchen, and then there was like a balcony upstairs for the children would sleep upstairs on the balcony, and that's it.

MOORE: And your grandfather, her husband, he was dead?

BAKER: No, he was dead a long time. Just my grandmother. And my grandmother was in the hospital and she took sick.

MOORE: What did she take sick?

BAKER: I don't know what kind of a sickness. She was a very sick woman. She was seventy years old, and she looked like ninety. Because

today a seventy year old, look at me, I'm eighty-four years old, and I thought my grandmother was ancient, you know. I thought she was so old.

MOORE: You're young.

BAKER: I'm young, you see. (they laugh)

MOORE: Yeah. How was the house heated that you lived in? Do you remember how was it heated, that room in the back?

BAKER: Well, we had a stove, you know, we put wood, you know . . .

MOORE: So it was wood heating. And how was it lit?

BAKER: Oh, it was, they keep it, they put coal in there.

MOORE: And what about the lamps? What type of lamps did you have, do you remember? How did you read? What type of lighting?

BAKER: We had electricity.

MOORE: You had electricity.

BAKER: Yeah, we had electricity.

MOORE: And was there a garden? Did you have a garden?

BAKER: No. We were in the front, in the house. We were in the front, and there were like a . . .

MOORE: And was that store in the middle of the town?

BAKER: Yes. I don't even remember the city, the street.

MOORE: That doesn't matter. It was in the town, right?

BAKER: Yes, in the town.

MOORE: And what furniture did you have in the house? You had that one room, what was in there? Do you remember?

BAKER: We had a room, we didn't have a mattress. You know, we were sleeping on straw.

MOORE: You were sleeping on straw. Straw with . . .

BAKER: With, with something on the sack, yeah.

MOORE: So it was a tick.

BAKER: Yeah, the tick. Yeah.

MOORE: And so, did you have tables? What did you have in the room?

BAKER: We had a table. We had a table and chairs.

MOORE: And who made that? Did you buy that? Was it store-bought, or did somebody make that?

BAKER: No. We had it from another building where we used to live. We

used to live in, but then we couldn't afford it, so my grandmother . . .

MOORE: So before the grocery store you lived somewhere else?

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: Where was that? Do you remember?

BAKER: No, no. I don't remember. I was a youngster then.

MOORE: And did, all right. So this was in the middle of the town, where this grocery store?

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: You remember it being urban.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: And who did the cooking in the family?

BAKER: My mother did.

MOORE: And what about the kitchen? Could you describe that kitchen, because it was a kitchen from a long time ago, so what did it look like?

BAKER: We had the old-fashioned stoves, you know, that you put the coal in, you know. I just can't describe it.

MOORE: So it was a black iron stove?

BAKER: A black iron stove, yeah.

MOORE: So, and did you, you heated up there?

BAKER: That's how they heat up the place, you know. We cooked on that stove, and then we got the heat from that, too.

MOORE: And what about, you had the heat from it, and what about plumbing? Did you have any plumbing inside?

BAKER: Yes.

MOORE: Was the toilet inside, or did you go outside?

BAKER: No, no. We had to go outside.

MOORE: You went outside to the toilet. And the water supply, where did that come from?

BAKER: We had to take, bring in water.

MOORE: From the well.

BAKER: Yeah, we had to bring in water. Like we had to, well from the town. There was, in the middle the town. I mean, on the street where we lived, like a few blocks away, four or five blocks away.

MOORE: And you carried it.

BAKER: We had to carry the water.

MOORE: How interesting. And did anybody else live in the building besides your father?

BAKER: Well, it was a big building. People lived in the building, and there were stores. There were stores in front, and then you had to walk in to the rest of the buildings, you know. I don't know what they call it.

MOORE: So wait a minute. Let me get this right. Your grocery store was on the ground floor, was it?

BAKER: Oh, yes, in front of the building. All the stores, there were a lot of stores.

MOORE: How many stories in the building?

BAKER: They had about four stores.

MOORE: Four stores, but how many stories? How many of those?

BAKER: There was no stories there. Just the building, just the stores. The building was inside. You had to walk in on what they call it, went in a gate, and walked into the building.

MOORE: And did you have any other family members who lived nearby, like

your father's family?

BAKER: No, nobody. My father's family lived in Warsaw.

MOORE: In Warsaw. And your grandparents, your father's parents, did you ever see them?

BAKER: Once in a while my mother, somebody went to Warsaw, so she used to send me to see the grandparents. And they were very poor.

MOORE: Yeah. And they lived where in Warsaw, do you remember?

BAKER: In, it was, the (?), it's called. The (?), that's how it was called, (?).

MOORE: And do you know how to spell that? (Mrs. Baker laughs) No. Okay, and . . .

BAKER: That's the name of, see, if you read the book about Warsaw, you know, that's in there.

MOORE: And what did you speak at home?

BAKER: Uh, I speak, uh . . .

MOORE: Well, let's go back to (?). What do you remember about that? What do you remember about that neighborhood?

BAKER: I don't remember much. I used to come to my aunt's, and my

cousins. And she had one daughter, and she didn't like me because I came from a small town, and I was very shy. And my aunt was very nice to me. So I would stay there a day or two, and then I would go back to that party that brought me there.

MOORE: And what type of, did they have indoor plumbing or any of those things?

BAKER: Yes. They lived in a modern building.

MOORE: I see. And so did you look up to those people in Warsaw as being city people?

BAKER: Yes. I saw my grandfather and grandmother. I remember she was a very little woman.

MOORE: Your grandmother.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: Well, what did you speak at home, what language?

BAKER: Jewish.

MOORE: You spoke Yiddish.

BAKER: Yiddish.

MOORE: Right. And did you learn Polish at all?

BAKER: I didn't go to school there. We couldn't afford it. I, you know, I had a rabbi come to the house, so I used to learn from the rabbi.

MOORE: You had a rabbi coming to the house.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: Let's talk about that. What about, first of all, who were you closest to in the family, do you think? Who was the closest person to you in the family that you had . . .

BAKER: Now? Now?

MOORE: No, when you were a child.

BAKER: Oh, I had nobody there. Just neighbors.

MOORE: What about your family? Who do you feel closest to in your family? Who was your favorite family person?

BAKER: No, I had no favorite. There was my grandmother. She was in the hospital, and I used to go every day and take care of her.

MOORE: And what was that hospital like? Can you tell us about that?

BAKER: I don't know the name of the hospital that was. I remember it was a big room, a lot of people there.

MOORE: And you were her favorite, and that . . .

BAKER: I used to stay near her, near her and watch her. I used to wash her, wash her eyes.

MOORE: What about, who were your customers? Were they people who spoke Yiddish, too?

BAKER: Yeah, neighbors.

MOORE: Neighbors. Was it a whole Yiddish-speaking area, or was it you . . .

BAKER: My mother was a good, she used to speak Polish, because they used to come in from the country, you know, and bring stuff to sell.

MOORE: And so you had to, your mother, when she worked in the grocery store, had to conduct business both in Polish and in Yiddish.

BAKER: Yeah, well, she did, people that came from the country, she had to speak to them in Polish. But most of the people, they spoke Yiddish.

MOORE: So would you say it was a ghetto area in terms of, meaning . . .

BAKER: There was, yeah. Mostly Jewish, Yiddish neighborhood, and they had a Jewish butcher shop, and around there.

MOORE: What about religious life? How was it with your family?

BAKER: We weren't, no.

MOORE: You said the rabbi helped you, and came in and . . .

BAKER: The rabbi used to come to the house and teach my brother.

MOORE: And teach you what?

BAKER: Hebrew.

MOORE: And then you learned . . .

BAKER: To read Hebrew. And whatever Polish I learned, whatever I did learn by myself.

MOORE: And did you go to a synagogue? Did you attend services?

BAKER: Yes. We had a little shul right nearby. We used to go on holidays, on the holidays. It was around the corner.

MOORE: And which holidays were the most favorite for you?

BAKER: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, yeah. That's the time.

MOORE: And what happened, how important was it to you? Was it more important to your grandmother than your mother, religion, or do you think the old people, it was more important to?

BAKER: Yes. We were very fond of my grandmother because we were raised,

most of, my father was sixteen years in the United States till we came.

MOORE: Yeah. And so . . .

BAKER: You didn't hear much of him either.

MOORE: Yeah. This is what many people did say.

BAKER: Yes.

MOORE: What about, describe . . .

BAKER: I had uncles in St. Louis.

MOORE: Oh.

BAKER: See, my grandmother's three, three sons went there.

MOORE: Your mother's . . .

BAKER: My mother's brothers.

MOORE: Lived in St. Louis.

BAKER: In St. Louis, yeah.

MOORE: That's interesting. Well, what about, describe Rosh Hashanah. What happened at Rosh Hashanah when you were a child?

BAKER: Very sad.

MOORE: Was it?

BAKER: Very sad, yes. You pray. And I remember my grandfather was alive. He used to go, and he would sit in the temple all night, a whole night and pray. I mean, at Yom Kippur. He would wear a white, that I remember, he had a white coat, you know, and no shoes, white socks. And he would sit and pray.

MOORE: And so . . .

BAKER: Because my, my grandfather was a hasid. You know what a hasid is? It's like the, he was a very religious man.

MOORE: Like an elder, an elder.

BAKER: Yeah. He used to sit and only read books from the Torah, from the Torah, reading books. He used to tell us, we were three kids, so he used to tell us stories, you know, from the book. And, he was a very learned man. Whatever he learned is from the book, from the Jewish, from the Hebrew books.

MOORE: Now, what did your grandparents' parents do? How did they get that grocery store? Was that in the family for a long time?

BAKER: Yes. My mother came in, my mother had to . . .

MOORE: So you grandparents . . .

BAKER: Because the sons left to be in United States.

MOORE: Oh, I see. But what did your great-grandparents do? Do you know what they did?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: They never talked about that.

BAKER: No.

MOORE: Why don't you describe any religious persecution or prejudice that you witnessed at that time.

BAKER: Yes. There was. We were Jewish children, and we used to go out of town. Like from the town we used to go, like it used to come in May, we used to go out, you know, out of the, out of the town, you know, and to the park, and the Gentile children would throw stones at us.

MOORE: And what did they say to you?

BAKER: "You Jew," you know, like they say. "Jew." They called us "Baylis[ph]," you know, in Polish.

MOORE: And did, how did they recognize you?

BAKER: They knew we were Jewish.

MOORE: Because you were darker, or . . .

BAKER: We were darker, right.

MOORE: And you were speaking Yiddish, too, so . . .

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: So they knew right away, you couldn't pass for anything.

BAKER: No, they would chase us. We had to run. We run for our lives.

(she laughs)

MOORE: And how did you look at this as a child?

BAKER: It was terrible.

MOORE: Were you scared?

BAKER: We hated them, we hated them. Oh, we couldn't wait to get out of Poland.

MOORE: Because of this experience.

BAKER: Sure.

MOORE: And what about the organized persecution you were talking about, when your mother had to go and get potatoes. What type . . .

BAKER: Oh, then, yes, then that's, they used to come in, Cossacks used

to come in from out of town. They wanted food, whatever they could get a hold of. They grabbed everything.

MOORE: From the store.

BAKER: From the stores, or people walking like this sort of people from those long peyas[ph], you know, the Jewish people were very religious people there, orthodox people. And they would pull them off, you know, or hit them, kill them. For what reason, I don't know. See, my brother would have known better, more than I.

MOORE: But, so you remember, now, what years was this happening? Do you remember? When did that start?

BAKER: That was in 1925. We came, it was in 1920, 1921, yeah.

MOORE: So when you, actually you were ten years old and you start remember that.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: And was your family ever threatened?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: But they came into the shop.

BAKER: No, because we locked ourselves in. We locked ourselves up.

They couldn't come into the shop. When we knew they were coming in on the horses.

MOORE: How did you know that? How did word spread?

BAKER: Well, I guess they knew they're coming in, one towards the other, you know. They're coming in, they're coming to the town.

MOORE: So how did that happen? Somebody, would they, how would word spread, then? Somebody, it was just hearsay.

BAKER: No, people say, "The Cossacks are coming, the Cossacks are coming." You know, like they say.

MOORE: What did the Cossacks look like?

BAKER: Very tough guys.

MOORE: What did they wear?

BAKER: Army, long coats, army coats, big hats.

MOORE: And then what about children? Did they touch children?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: Mostly it was targeted at taking things and . . .

BAKER: Yeah, religious people, they didn't like. They just felt it was fun. This is fun for them. It was just fun.

MOORE: What about the synagogues? What did they do to the shul you talked about?

BAKER: Oh, that they also destroyed, tried to destroy it.

MOORE: How did they do that?

BAKER: Put a fire under it or, but religious things I don't think so they did anything, because we had churches.

MOORE: But churches were not . . .

BAKER: We have a big synagogue, but we have, when we went, we went to a little synagogue. It was right near where we lived, but there was a big synagogue there in the town. And no, they didn't touch them there. Religious things they didn't touch.

MOORE: Well, you said it's . . .

BAKER: Because there was that big church.

MOORE: You said that they did destroy synagogues.

BAKER: The little ones. I think so. I'm not sure. I don't know. I don't remember that.

MOORE: In general, did your mother and grandmother, did they talk very much about this?

BAKER: No, no. I don't remember much, no.

MOORE: And you said because your mother spoke Polish, she passed as a Pole because her Polish was good enough?

BAKER: Well, she passed because she needed to get food, you know. But they wouldn't recognize us, that she was Jewish, because she didn't look like Jewish.

MOORE: Because she had light eyes?

BAKER: Yes, she had light eyes, and she, and her nose was, she looked, pug nose she had. And she spoke good language.

MOORE: How did she learn Polish, your mother? How did she learn it so well?

BAKER: From the business, you know.

MOORE: So she picked it up . . .

BAKER: She didn't go to school either. She didn't go to school.

MOORE: So you spoke Yiddish at home. I'm trying to think now what I can ask you about this life here. What did you do, you didn't go to school.

BAKER: No, we couldn't go to school because we had to pay. We couldn't afford it, to pay.

MOORE: Oh, yeah. Let's get back to this. Your mother had to go get food, but you sold food in the grocery store, didn't you?

BAKER: Yeah. But we had, we didn't have bread, and we didn't have potatoes, you know.

MOORE: In the shop.

BAKER: We couldn't go in to cook, you know. What we had was flour or beans and things like that.

MOORE: In the shop.

BAKER: In the shop there. But you had to get bread, you couldn't get to a bakery, and you couldn't get anything.

MOORE: What about this basement hiding you talked about? When was that? You hid in the basement, you said.

BAKER: Yeah, well.

MOORE: How old were you then?

BAKER: I was a youngster then. I must have been about eight years old.

MOORE: And what happened?

BAKER: Then the rest I don't know what happened. Then we quieted down.

MOORE: And when you were about eight years old, that's 1917 or so.

BAKER: Yeah. It could have been about that.

MOORE: Around then. Okay. So tell me what happened in that time. How did you get in the basement? Did they explain to you why, or . . .

BAKER: No, we had to hide ourselves, because we had to go inside through the gates, you know, with the gates. We couldn't be in the front, because we lived in the front, you know, in the store. So we had to close up the store, and we went in the back, and we were hiding.

MOORE: Did you go in the basement under . . .

BAKER: From the building.

MOORE: Yeah.

BAKER: Not the building inside, you know, inside the gate. And there was a basement there.

MOORE: And so you went there to hide.

BAKER: So we stayed there.

MOORE: Who's we?

BAKER: Well, whoever, you know, there was more people there that lived in the front, went into the building, inside.

MOORE: So the people in the building hid in the basement for how long?

BAKER: For how long, I don't know. Not for too long.

MOORE: Did you sleep there?

BAKER: Yeah. We had to sleep there, sure.

MOORE: And . . .

BAKER: Until it quieted down.

MOORE: And what was "it" quieted down? What was the "it" you're talking about? What was making you be in the basement? Do you remember? Did they explain to you what was happening?

BAKER: We knew what was happening, that they're coming in, you know.

MOORE: Who's "they" now?

BAKER: The Cossacks.

MOORE: Oh, so that was a time when the Cossacks were very active.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: And . . .

BAKER: So people used to close the stores and hide.

MOORE: And was there, did you feel clear as a child, for this?

BAKER: Of course, of course.

MOORE: And was it very crowded in the basement?

BAKER: No, not too crowded, because there were other places people could hide themselves inside.

MOORE: And where, what type of games and things did you play when you were a child? What type of, do you remember anything particular to that era?

BAKER: No. Potsy, and the other. I don't remember.

MOORE: What's Potsy?

BAKER: (she laughs) You know, I don't know what they call it. I don't know what they call that. You know, it's all with the . . . (she gestures)

MOORE: You throw something.

BAKER: No. Like, with a rolling pin, with a rolling, uh . . .

MOORE: Bocci?

BAKER: Bocci, yeah.

MOORE: Oh, Bocci! Bocci balls.

BAKER: Yeah. That, or jumping rope. Jumping rope, and things like that.

MOORE: Hide and seek?

BAKER: Hide and seek, and jumping rope.

MOORE: Do you remember any songs from when you jumped rope? You were too small then. All right. What was your favorite food? What was mealtime like in your house? Do you remember?

BAKER: We had chicken and soup.

MOORE: Together? Did everybody eat together?

BAKER: Of course.

MOORE: How many times a day did you eat together?

BAKER: Well, I just had breakfast, and dinner.

MOORE: What did you eat for breakfast?

BAKER: Cereal, we had cooked cereal. Milk, bread, bread.

MOORE: What was typical there? Did you pray before dinner at all?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: You didn't say any prayers before your food.

BAKER: No.

MOORE: Did you eat kosher?

BAKER: Yeah, yeah. Of course, only kosher. Only kosher. They were kosher butchers and Jewish people, and bought from the Jewish butcher.

MOORE: Do you still keep kosher?

BAKER: Not here. In New York I did.

MOORE: In New York, in Brooklyn.

BAKER: Yeah. And here it's very hard. It's very hard to get to a Jewish butcher.

MOORE: But do you keep any of your dietary restrictions you used to have as a kid, like you eat pork now?

BAKER: Outside, yes, but not in the house. I wouldn't bring it in the house. (she laughs)

MOORE: What about, did you know any English before you came to this country?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: Did anyone in your family know any English?

BAKER: No, no.

MOORE: I mean, your father came here, so he knew.

BAKER: Yeah, my father knew, but I used to read the Polish books. And even now I can't read it, because I forgot all about it, if I start to read it. And my father didn't want me to read Polish books. He would throw them away. "You came to the United States, you got to learn English."

MOORE: What about, when did your father, how old were you when your father left for the United States?

BAKER: I was a youngster. I don't even remember when he left.

MOORE: And you don't remember much about him when you were little?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: And the other children, did they . . .

BAKER: Just they had the picture of him, you know.

MOORE: And did he write, you know, did he write to you?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: So how did you, when's the first time you heard about, that you

were ready to come to the United States. How did you . . .

BAKER: Because we had a quota, you know, we had to wait. We could have gone from when my grandfather was alive, we were youngsters. I was, must have been then about six or seven years old. My sister was a baby, you know. And my grandfather wanted, you know, he used to say, tell my grandmother, "Why don't you send her with the children to her husband?" And my grandmother wanted to go, too, but she didn't. She wouldn't let her go. And then my grandfather passed away, so my grandmother wanted to go, too, to the United States. So she couldn't, because she was sick already. She couldn't make it, so the doctor told her, "You couldn't make it, you'll never make it." Because here you couldn't come in if you were sick or you have any sickness. You know, now anybody comes in here, to the United States. But then you went through Ellis Island, they examined you, and if you had some kind of disease they'd send you right back. They wouldn't let you through.

MOORE: And then what happened, your grandmother couldn't go, so why didn't your mother . . .

BAKER: So we had to wait then, the quota closed. They closed, and we had to wait. So we had to wait.

MOORE: So basically you were just waiting the whole time for the quota

to open? And how did you find out . . .

BAKER: Yeah. Then my mother couldn't leave my grandmother. She couldn't leave her.

MOORE: Oh, I see.

BAKER: She couldn't leave her, because she was sick. She was the only one to take care of her.

MOORE: I see. So she took care of your grandmother, and then . . .

BAKER: So she took care of her. My mother used to go and sleep with her at night in the hospital, and leave us alone. And I would go during the day and stay with her, feed her.

MOORE: And so during the night you were frightened when your mother was away?

BAKER: Oh, yes. They were fine.

MOORE: And you were the oldest, and you took care of the other children.

BAKER: Yeah. Well, we were, my brother and I were a year apart. We were very close.

MOORE: And so you, when your mother went away did you, what were you frightened of?

BAKER: Well, somebody will break in . . .

MOORE: Could you sleep?

BAKER: And they'd kill us.

MOORE: Could you sleep?

BAKER: Well, we sleep, we're tired, you know, we're kids, you know. You sleep.

MOORE: Yeah.

BAKER: Sometimes you hear noise outside, and somebody wants to break in.

MOORE: And somebody you thought would be the Cossacks?

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

BAKER: They hated the Jews especially. They hated the Jews. That's what they were after.

MOORE: Well, so your grandfather was the first to think of it. Your father came here, and your grandfather was eager.

BAKER: Yeah, for us to join him.

MOORE: When did you finally get moving as to coming to the United States? What happened? What are the events that led up coming

time?

BAKER: Well, finally we got the papers that we can leave.

MOORE: And was that before your grandmother died, or after?

BAKER: Oh, that's after, a few years after.

MOORE: So you waited for, you waited, your mother waited right till the end with your grandmother.

BAKER: Yes. When my grandmother died, I think I was ten or eleven years old. See, we had to wait all that time until we got the papers to go.

MOORE: And so do you remember getting ready to leave?

BAKER: Oh, yes. We were very happy to go.

MOORE: What about the grocery store? What happened to that?

BAKER: We left it and just sold everything out, and we left the store. It didn't belong to us. There was a landlord there, you know. And they took it over, whatever it is, and we didn't care. We took the train, we packed our things, whatever we had.

MOORE: What did you pack? What did you leave behind?

BAKER: Just, nothing, nothing. I mean, everything, but we had nothing.

We had nothing. Just the clothes that you had, and that's it.

MOORE: Do you remember selling things?

BAKER: No, because there wasn't much to sell.

MOORE: Oh, yes. Okay. So, what, did you take anything special with you, that was a doll, or anything that was clear to you?

BAKER: No, no.

MOORE: How about your brother and sister? Do you remember them taking anything?

BAKER: No, no. There wasn't . . .

MOORE: Who packed? Who packed your things?

BAKER: Well, my mother. My mother did. But (?) wanted to take.

MOORE: Did you take trunks, or . . .

BAKER: Just a trunk. We had a trunk, small. A small satchel like they show in, and . . .

MOORE: And so what was in those things, that trunk? You had some things in there.

BAKER: Some other clothes, you know. And mementos, you know, like pictures, pictures.

MOORE: Did you have any religious . . .

BAKER: Well, we had the religious books, sure, of course, and that's about all. That's about all we had. And the clothes.

MOORE: And the clothes on your back. And what did you wear? Do you remember, tell me what happened when you were packing your things. You were excited, you said.

BAKER: Oh, yeah. There wasn't much to pack, honey. There wasn't much to pack. (she laughs) So my mother used to put the things together, and we would have this little, you know, this little, what do you call it, the straw things, you know.

MOORE: And so, okay. So, then, how did you get to where, where were you leaving from?

BAKER: We went to Warsaw, and we stayed by my aunt, my father's sister, until we went to Antwerp.

MOORE: Well, how did you get to Warsaw?

BAKER: By train.

MOORE: From your little town?

BAKER: Yeah, from the little town.

MOORE: How did you get the trunk to the train?

BAKER: We got to the train with, we hired a, you know, a horse and wagon, you know, the fancy horse and wagon, we went there.

MOORE: Was that exciting?

BAKER: We said goodbye to everybody. That was exciting for children.

MOORE: (she laughs) What was the goodbye like, though? Who came to say goodbye to you?

BAKER: Oh, I had a cousin there, one cousin. She was like a step-cousin, you know, my mother's step-cousin.

MOORE: In the same town.

BAKER: Yeah. And she couldn't come with us. She wanted to come. And we came, we thought we were coming to a golden land, but we had it hard.

MOORE: But what did you know about America before you came?

BAKER: Well, it was nice. Everything was good there, and we were disappointed. We already lived . . .

MOORE: You were disappointed when you came?

BAKER: Yes, because it was cleaner where I lived, and we came downtown

on Cannon Street.

MOORE: Oh, yeah.

BAKER: Ooh, it's awful. And that's where I'm going to come here, and stay here. And on the top floor, we had three flights to go up. It was terrible. That's how we came. My father took us there, right off the ship. We didn't have to stay long in Ellis Island. He took us off . . .

MOORE: Let's go back a little bit. So you had people, how many people said goodbye to you, you think? I mean, what was it like for you?

BAKER: Well, the town, we didn't cry. We were happy. We were happy to leave. You couldn't walk in the street, you know. And if you said something bad, you know, about the Polish people, they watch you and they say, "What did you say? What did you say?" You know. And they'll hit you. They'll throw, especially the children. Children, they hit children.

MOORE: So you were happy to leave?

BAKER: So we were happy to leave.

MOORE: And so, all right. Let's get, you got to Warsaw, where you stayed with your aunt.

BAKER: I stayed with my aunt.

MOORE: What was that place like for you?

BAKER: She had a nice place, all modern, nice. She had a bedroom. A kitchen, a dining room, nice furniture they had there.

MOORE: Did she want to come to the States, too?

BAKER: No, she didn't. I don't know nothing from them.

MOORE: You don't know anything that happened.

BAKER: They were all killed.

MOORE: Oh. And at the beginning when you came over did you write to them again?

BAKER: Yes, we wrote to them. My husband, my father was, wasn't well, and he didn't have much money. And the older children, my brother and I, had to go to work.

MOORE: So you went to Warsaw. How long did you stay in Warsaw before you went to Antwerp?

BAKER: A few days. Then we had to take the train to Antwerp. And from there we got the ship.

MOORE: Did you see anything on the train new to you already?

BAKER: No. We just watched through the windows, like we went through Paris at night. It was dark, and they were telling us in Paris we saw, we saw the lights, that's all. It was in the night, it was dark.

MOORE: And you got to Antwerp.

BAKER: And we stayed there.

MOORE: Where?

BAKER: Also in a big, big room with a lot of people, that they were going to the United States. And we slept, also, in the bunk beds, you know, in a big room, all in the big room.

MOORE: Was it for immigrants, this?

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: And so was it run by . . .

BAKER: They were all taking that ship that we were taking.

MOORE: Was it particularly a place established for Jews, or was it one that was for all nationalities?

BAKER: All nationalities, sure.

MOORE: Some people arranged to go through these organizations. You

went, just organized yourself to go.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: How did you get the money to come to the States? Did your father send it?

BAKER: My father didn't send us any money. My uncles used to send us money, my uncles from St. Louis.

MOORE: I see. And so you saved that money?

BAKER: Yeah. We've had some money, and we came. They sent us the tickets, you know.

MOORE: Oh, they sent the tickets.

BAKER: They sent us the tickets. We couldn't buy the tickets. They sent us the tickets.

MOORE: And so . . .

BAKER: We just had to get the permit to go.

MOORE: And to get the permit, did you have any medical examination in Poland?

BAKER: Oh, yes.

MOORE: What happened there?

BAKER: Not in Poland, in Antwerp.

MOORE: In Antwerp.

BAKER: Yeah. Then we had, we had to go through all the examinations, you know.

MOORE: What did they do to you in Antwerp?

BAKER: They strip you, you know, and they examine you and take certain baths, you know, with cobble, you know, on there.

MOORE: You took certain baths?

BAKER: Showers, you know. And that's about all.

MOORE: What did they check when they gave you . . .

BAKER: They checked for disease, you know, if you have any disease.

MOORE: What did they check for?

BAKER: For lice in your head.

MOORE: And they checked your eyes?

BAKER: They looked in your eyes, if you're all right, if you're healthy.

And if something's wrong with your eyes, they wouldn't let you in the United States.

MOORE: Well, did you see any people rejected in Antwerp already?

BAKER: Yeah. No, not, they couldn't, yes. Not there, no.

MOORE: Not in Antwerp.

BAKER: Not in Antwerp. In Ellis Island there were some people.

MOORE: Who were rejected.

BAKER: Rejected, yeah.

MOORE: Okay. So let's, if you got the answers, do you remember seeing the boat for the first time?

BAKER: Yeah, we saw it. It was the Red Star.

MOORE: The Red Star.

BAKER: It was the American ship we had.

MOORE: And do you remember boarding it and the whole thing?

BAKER: Yeah, we stayed below.

MOORE: And where did you stay in the boat?

BAKER: We stayed below.

MOORE: In steerage.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: What class was that?

BAKER: It was the third class, you know, the lowest, the cheapest, we had, the cheapest.

MOORE: And what were the accommodations? What were they like?

BAKER: I tell you the truth, I don't remember. I don't remember. I know I couldn't smell the food. I know we were sick. We couldn't smell, they told us to go upstairs, you'll feel better. We went upstairs, we couldn't sit. We laid. We laid all the time in bed. We couldn't move. I didn't even know how the ship looked.

MOORE: Really? So you didn't eat the whole time. In ten days, you said?

BAKER: Ten days.

MOORE: And when did you leave? What date did you leave?

BAKER: I don't remember what day.

MOORE: You have down here December 1925.

BAKER: For the ten (?), that was, that was right.

MOORE: You came here in December.

BAKER: December.

MOORE: So, in wintertime. What was the voyage like?

BAKER: It was, well, I'm telling you. We were sick. We couldn't do nothing on the ship.

MOORE: Just because of seasickness, right?

BAKER: On the ship we couldn't move. We laid in bed, and then they told us to get out of bed. (they laugh)

MOORE: Wait a minute, though. Was it because it was a rough voyage?

BAKER: It was rough. I guess so, because we so seasick.

MOORE: And were other people seasick?

BAKER: We got so seasick.

MOORE: Were other people besides you seasick down there?

BAKER: Yeah. (she laughs) My brother, he was the only one that was running around and having a ball. He knew everything what was going on on the ship. He didn't know nothing.

MOORE: Did he eat, too?

BAKER: Sure. He ate. He had a good time. Too bad that he's not alive.
He would tell you stories.

MOORE: Well, what about, so you just stayed in bed the entire time, and
then they got you out of bed . . .

BAKER: We just stayed in the bunk, my mother and my sister and I, and
they told us to go upstairs, that we'll feel better.

MOORE: Did you throw up and stuff?

BAKER: Sure.

MOORE: Where?

BAKER: Where? All over the place. (she coughs)

MOORE: (she laughs) Did other people besides your family do the same
thing?

BAKER: Well, of course, if they didn't feel good, but a lot of people
felt good.

MOORE: So you were just, do you think it was atypical the way you felt?

BAKER: Sure. It was bad. (she laughs)

MOORE: All right, now . . .

BAKER: We had that taste for months. We couldn't smell, eat food, you

know, after we got off the ship. It took months until that odor . . .

MOORE: What odor?

BAKER: From the ship. You know, the food, with all that stuff. Who, it was awful.

MOORE: Did you ever take a boat trip after that? Did you ever go on a boat after that?

BAKER: I was afraid. (she laughs) I was afraid to go, I would get seasick. I was.

MOORE: Okay. So finally they told you to get out of bed. And where was that? When you saw, did you see land for the first time?

BAKER: Yeah, we saw the Statue of Liberty.

MOORE: And what was the atmosphere in the boat then?

BAKER: Very nice. We saw the Statue of Liberty when we were coming in. Everybody was happy, here we are.

MOORE: Were they cheering or . . .

BAKER: Of course.

MOORE: And so was everybody up on deck?

BAKER: Most everybody.

MOORE: So they got you out of bed to see the Statue of Liberty?

BAKER: Well, then already we felt better, because you're out already from the high seas.

MOORE: Oh, I see. So once you got off there . . .

BAKER: Once you got out of the high seas, you know, and, it's rough. So you come towards land. So the water is not, it's not so bad, so then we started feeling better.

MOORE: And what was your impression of the Statue of Liberty? Had they told you about it beforehand?

BAKER: Yes, they know. They told us.

MOORE: And so you went to Ellis Island. How did you get to the boat, to Ellis Island?

BAKER: Well, it was a small boat that took us from the ship to Ellis Island. It was a small boat.

MOORE: A small boat. And was it crowded, that boat?

BAKER: Yes, of course it was.

MOORE: And what do you remember about Ellis Island? Tell me, walk me

through what you remember when you got out at Ellis Island.

BAKER: It was rough. It was crowded. There were people with lines and lines and lines of people, and it was awful. It was awful.

MOORE: Was it clean?

BAKER: It wasn't clean. It was awful. I went to see it again. I think about twenty years ago we went on a trip from the senior citizens, I went on a trip to Ellis Island to see it before they started building, they were talking about building it up. It was awful.

MOORE: And was it . . .

BAKER: And then they had a place where they kept the sick people. I think they still have one, don't they? Yeah. They still, they have.

MOORE: So you were lining up in lines. Was there anything you saw for the first time there?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: And so when you were in line, did you have a medical examination?

BAKER: Yes. On the, before we left, before we got through. You know, before we went through.

MOORE: Tell me what happened. You came up, you remember the big hall.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: Was that where all the people were?

BAKER: Yeah. And they examined you.

MOORE: And what did they do to you to examine you?

BAKER: Nothing, just examined you.

MOORE: Uh-huh.

BAKER: Your eyes, your heart, and . . .

MOORE: Your eyes and your heart.

BAKER: Yeah, and they examined me. So fine, everything was fine.

MOORE: And were there rumors that people were being sent back. Do you remember that?

BAKER: Yes. There was people, there were sick people there. They were coughing, or elderly people.

MOORE: Did you see any children sent back, for example . . .

BAKER: No. That I didn't see.

MOORE: And what happened when they, was this rumor, or did you actually

see people who were not going to be permitted to stay?

BAKER: No. There was no rumors. I mean, you saw, you heard. You had to wait. And there's a lot of people, there were, they had a big, people had to come from out of town, from different towns, to pick them up, so they had to stay overnight. Some people, they were going to, Philadelphia, they were going to Boston, they were going to San Francisco, whatever, you know. So they had to wait there until the people came to take them off.

MOORE: I see. And your whole family, everyone went through with flying colors, or was anyone . . .

BAKER: Yeah. No, we were all fine.

MOORE: Okay. Now, what happened after that? Did you hear English for the first time there? Where did you hear English first?

BAKER: On the ship, you know, because there were, there were English, the workers did. The crew there was, they were all English, sure.

MOORE: And, okay. So you went through lines. Did anyone translate for you at Ellis Island?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: Okay. Wait. Okay. So where, when you passed through Ellis

Island, how did you get to where you're going?

BAKER: We're gone to Cannon Street. (she laughs)

MOORE: But how, who brought you there?

BAKER: My father.

MOORE: He was waiting at Ellis Island?

BAKER: Oh, yes. He was there.

MOORE: And do you remember seeing him?

BAKER: Yeah, he was there with his, with a friend of his, he came with a friend of his, came to take us home, and he had the apartment all ready, waiting for us.

MOORE: And so it was the first time you saw your father as a child.

BAKER: Yeah. I don't remember him, how he looked, only from pictures I would recognize him. But I didn't remember.

MOORE: And what was your impression? Were you happy?

BAKER: Yeah, of course.

MOORE: And your mother?

BAKER: My mother, too, you know. She was a long time without him.

MOORE: And so when you went to Cannon Street, what was your mother's reaction about Cannon Street? The same?

BAKER: She didn't say nothing. She just was looking out for her children, she says, you know. What could she say? Couldn't say nothing.

MOORE: And what about that neighborhood in Cannon Street? What was it like?

BAKER: Terrible.

MOORE: Was it is . . .

BAKER: Terrible.

MOORE: Like, what . . .

BAKER: A big stoop, you know, to go up, and steps, and then you had to go up on the third floor.

MOORE: And how many rooms . . .

BAKER: And people were standing, we had to, like one room, a walk-through, you know, to all the rooms, a kitchen and a bedroom and another bedroom. Two bedrooms and a kitchen.

MOORE: Was it rented?

BAKER: Sure, rented. But we didn't stay long there.

MOORE: How long?

BAKER: Then we moved to Brooklyn.

MOORE: How long did you stay?

BAKER: About eight months, I think, we stayed there.

MOORE: Then you moved to Brooklyn.

BAKER: Then we moved to Brooklyn. Then it was nice.

MOORE: What section of Brooklyn did you move to?

BAKER: We moved, in Williams, in East New York. You know where East New York?

MOORE: I'm not sure.

BAKER: Yeah, East New York. It's near Canarsie there somewheres around there.

MOORE: And was that a Polish neighborhood, or was it a Jewish neighborhood, or was it a . . .

BAKER: Yeah. Then my mother, then the children got married, so my mother went, she lived on Blake Avenue.

MOORE: Okay. But wait a minute. Let's go back to that neighborhood you grew up in. You were about sixteen, seventeen. Okay. What was that neighborhood in Brooklyn like?

BAKER: Very nice. I met friends. I had to go to work.

MOORE: And what, like, was it in any way an ethnic neighborhood, or was it all mixed?

BAKER: It was Jewish, a Jewish neighborhood.

MOORE: And so could you see? Could you speak Yiddish there?

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: So people there spoke Yiddish.

BAKER: And you learned, you learned English talking to the people, you know. And that's how you learned.

MOORE: Were any of the people in that neighborhood from your old town?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: No. And were many Polish?

BAKER: Yes, there were Polish people.

MOORE: Polish Jews.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: Right.

BAKER: This was a Polish lady that my mother moved to another, when we were all out of the house. So my mother moved to Blake Avenue, you know, that's in Brownsville, you call it. So she had a, she had a neighbor, a Polish woman, and she used to converse with her.

MOORE: In?

BAKER: In Polish.

MOORE: In Polish. Well, what about, okay, let's see. We need to get all these things. Now, when you got to the United States, did your religious practice change at all? Did you go to the synagogue in the States at all?

BAKER: No. No, we weren't religious.

MOORE: But did you go on high holidays?

BAKER: Oh, high holidays we used to go, yeah.

MOORE: And what was your first job when you got here? What did you do?

BAKER: I was a sewing . . .

MOORE: In the garment . . .

BAKER: On a machine, in the garment center.

MOORE: And what did you do? How did you learn that?

BAKER: I learned it there.

MOORE: So you just went there?

BAKER: Yes. And they were teaching me how to work.

MOORE: Do you still make your own clothes?

BAKER: I used to. Not any more. (she laughs)

MOORE: And how long did you work there?

BAKER: Until I got married. Then I stopped working.

MOORE: And when did you get married?

BAKER: I got married, I was twenty-one, twenty-one years old.

MOORE: And did you marry . . .

BAKER: I was five years, yes, I was five years in the country when I got married.

MOORE: Do you remember any anecdotes about learning English? Was it easy to learn English?

BAKER: Yeah, it wasn't too bad.

MOORE: Did anybody make fun of you when you were first learning?

BAKER: Well, of course, and they corrected me.

MOORE: Did you have any persecution here? Did you ever hear anything negative here?

BAKER: No.

MOORE: And so who, how did you meet your husband?

BAKER: Oh, so we went to an affair, you know, and had dancing and all that. And I had a cousin, yeah. She passed away. She lived in Florida. And through her I met other friends. And my brother, he was also, he had a lot of friends, through his friends. And that's how I met my husband.

MOORE: And your husband, was he also a Polish Jew?

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: He was also?

BAKER: Yeah. He lived in the Shelsk[ph].

MOORE: Where?

BAKER: In the Shelsk[ph], west of Poland. Also not far from Warsaw.

MOORE: And did you speak Yiddish to him?

BAKER: Sure.

MOORE: So you spoke, the language at home was Yiddish?

BAKER: And he spoke, he spoke English, too, yeah. He came in 1920.

MOORE: Oh. So how did, oh, so you met him, all right. So, what did he do for a living?

BAKER: He was in the garment industry.

MOORE: So you both were.

BAKER: Yeah. He was in the garment industry.

MOORE: And did you have children?

BAKER: Yeah. I have children. Sure, I have two daughters.

MOORE: Two daughters, and your granddaughter.

BAKER: Yeah. (she laughs)

MOORE: And two daughters, and how, and did they speak Yiddish, too?

BAKER: Very little. My mother used to speak to them in Yiddish, you know. And they would answer her in English.

MOORE: But they heard it.

BAKER: She understood them, but they didn't speak to her, in Jewish to her. They would answer her in English.

MOORE: Did your mother or father ever consider going back, or did any of you ever consider going back to Poland?

BAKER: No. My father, no, never.

MOORE: Okay. So you had two daughters, and you had grandchildren. How many grandchildren did you have?

BAKER: I have two, three grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

MOORE: Oh. And so you lived in Brooklyn most of your life, then?

BAKER: I lived in Brighton Beach.

MOORE: In Brighton Beach. And that's where the children grew up, Brighton Beach?

BAKER: Well, I lived in Brownsville, too, you know. I lived in East New York. I lived for a while, my daughter was born there. And then I moved away to Kings Highway section, if you know where it is.

MOORE: All right.

BAKER: I lived there.

MOORE: So do you, you maintained those same religious pattern you had in Poland here in the United States.

BAKER: Uh-huh.

MOORE: You didn't go every week to synagogue.

BAKER: No.

MOORE: But you went on high holidays.

BAKER: No, no. Because my father was never a religious man. My husband wasn't a religious man either. On the holidays we were.

MOORE: But culturally you kept, how about food?

BAKER: I used to have kosher food.

MOORE: With the children?

BAKER: With the children, yeah. (she laughs) And then when I came to California, I couldn't get the Jewish food.

MOORE: All right. Did any family tragedy occur during the years that you came to the United States? Anything that happened in the United States that was tragic for your family?

BAKER: No, no, except they passed away.

MOORE: Your father and your mother passed away when? How old were you?

BAKER: I have that envelope there. I have the dates when my . . .

MOORE: Hold on, I'll take it off. (referring to the microphone)

BAKER: December the 16th, 1972. That's my brother.

MOORE: Al died December 16, 1972.

BAKER: And Molly Zalovsky[ph], October the 23rd, 1976, my sister died.

MOORE: How about your mom?

BAKER: My mother died, Molly Postoni[ph] died September 6, 1969.

MOORE: Did your, do you think when you look back in your life.

BAKER: That was a tragedy. My brother was young.

MOORE: Your brother was very young.

BAKER: Yeah. (voices are heard speaking off mike)

MOORE: What was the tragedy about your brother?

BAKER: He had heart trouble.

MOORE: And he died very young?

BAKER: He was sixty-eight, sixty-five. My husband died, he was sixty-

eight.

MOORE: And your father, you said, died very young.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: Here in this country?

BAKER: He died, I got married in 1931, the same year, 1931.

MOORE: And what, he was only how old then?

BAKER: He was forty-five years old.

MOORE: And what did he die of?

BAKER: Heart trouble.

MOORE: So that your brother inherited the heart trouble.

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: How did your mother get along then, at that time? Who supported her?

BAKER: Well, she, the children, she had her children.

MOORE: So did she work here in this country?

BAKER: She didn't work, no. She just took, she had two children.

MOORE: Yeah, so they had . . .

BAKER: So they helped, they helped.

MOORE: Do you think, you're now speaking collectively for your brother and your sister and your mother and your father. Were any, were they, how do you feel they felt about the decision to come to this country? Did they have regrets?

BAKER: No. No, they were happy. My brother started to work right away, too, because he was learning a trade, in Poland yet, in Poland yet. So he didn't want to go to cheder, you know, school, Jewish school. So my mother, so she gave him in to learn a trade.

MOORE: And what trade was that?

BAKER: That was men's clothing.

MOORE: Men's clothing.

BAKER: So that's what he did. So he learned it there, and when he came to the United States, so he got a job in that.

MOORE: In the garment district.

BAKER: Yeah, men's clothing.

MOORE: So you were all somehow included.

BAKER: Yeah, men's clothing. He was in men's clothing.

MOORE: And so you think that your father was pretty happy about coming here?

BAKER: Oh, yeah, yeah. The children were fine. I met friends, I used to go out . . .

MOORE: And so you were pretty, and how about, do you think that you maintained your background heritage with your children and grandchildren?

BAKER: Yeah.

MOORE: And are your grandchildren interested in your life?

BAKER: Yes, they are. They're very good kids. (she laughs)

MOORE: I think this is a good place to stop. I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for helping us.

BAKER: Thank you. (she laughs) Thank you. You brought back my history.

MOORE: And we'll send you a copy of this, too.

BAKER: But I wish I could remember more things. I can't.

MOORE: You remembered a lot, you remembered a lot. This is Kate Moore

signing off with Rose Baker in Seal Beach, California on January 12, 1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

BAKER: My granddaughter will be very happy.

MOORE: We'll send you a copy of it, too.

BAKER: Yeah.