

KM-039

NAME: SOPHIE SHUMAN DOBRIN TAUB
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INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE
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TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 12/1994

THE UKRAINE, 1923
AGE 18
PASSAGE ON "THE TYRRHENIA"

Oral Historian's Note: Automobiles can be heard going by during the recording of this interview. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of the Oral History Project, 12/10/1994.

MOORE: Good morning. This is Kate Moore for the National Park Service. Today is the 25th of April 1994, and I'm in Chicago at the home of Sophie Dobrin, who came from Russia in 1923 when she was eighteen years old. Why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth, please.

TAUB: My full name of now, or as I was?

MOORE: Full name right now.

TAUB: Okay. Right now. My name is Sophie Dobrin Taub. Should I

spell it?

MOORE:Yes, please.

TAUB:D-O-B-R-I-N, T-A-U-B. Sophie Dobrin Taub.

MOORE:All right. Dobrin, right?

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:What is your maiden name?

TAUB:My maiden name is Sophie Schuman.

MOORE:Spell that, please.

TAUB:S-C-H-U-M, U-M-A-N.

MOORE:Where were you born?

TAUB:In Russia. In Volena[ph] Gubernia.

MOORE:Could you spell that?

TAUB:No. (she laughs)

MOORE:All right. Later we'll try to ask you about that. What size,
what was the name of the town?

TAUB:Zhitomir.

MOORE:Zhitomir.

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:And what size town was that?

TAUB:A big one. It's a big size, I wouldn't know, remember how many people, but it was a big town.

MOORE:And what did the town look like?

TAUB:Well, it was beautiful. We had the parks down there, like we called it down there (?). And there was four of them. The first one, the second one, the third and the fourth. And they were all one after another. They were beautiful down there. Weekends, everybody was down there walking with the best clothes, and just parading around back and forth, back and forth. As a child I didn't have no clothes on. But whatever I had, I made the best of it. I even was barefooted until I was about thirteen, with old shoes and all that. And I didn't have a real pair of shoes, even. But I used to go down there and stay behind the benches and watch the people walk by, go back and forth, parading around. It was beautiful. The town itself was a great big one, there was a lot of big stores. And there was, in the stores there were some beautiful fruit stores,

and there were bananas in there, you know, bunches of bananas hanging. And I didn't know what it was. Ooh, the rich people eating that, what is that? I never knew until I came to the United States what a banana is. That's another thing.

MOORE:Where was this town located in Russia? What part of Russia was it? What was the next biggest town?

TAUB:Well, the next biggest town was Kiev.

MOORE:Kiev.

TAUB:Yeah. And then it was Odessa, Moscow, you know.

MOORE:And the major industry of that town, what would you say that was, of the big town that you came from?

TAUB:I don't remember. I was much too young to pay attention to that. (she laughs)

MOORE:What was your father's name?

TAUB:Samuel.

MOORE:Samuel.

TAUB:Schuman.

MOORE:Schuman. Samuel is S-A-M-U-E-L?

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:What was his occupation?

TAUB:He was a tailor, a ladies tailor.

MOORE:A ladies tailor. (automobiles can be heard in the
background)

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:And what did he look like? How would you describe your father?

TAUB:He was a nice, tall man, and nice-shaven. He was dressed nice,
and he was a ladies tailor making wedding dresses,
bridesmaid dresses, all this kind of ladies wear. And
he was, he was a very handsome man, I can say, he was.
(she laughs)

MOORE:And . . .

TAUB:But I was kind of a stranger with him, because I didn't know
him. When I was a little baby, he left for the United
States, and then he came back to take the family back to
the United States. He couldn't take all of them, so he
took only two daughters and left Mother with the rest of

the children in Russia. And then he sent some papers for us to come to the United States. At that time, the war broke out. When the war broke out, then nobody could go.

MOORE:Well, let's go back to your father's personality and temperament. What do you remember of him? How would you characterize your father?

TAUB:Well, I can't say anything, that he was handsome, he was nice. But I was away from him, I was kind of scared of him as a child. You know, all of a sudden . . .

MOORE:He was handsome . . .

TAUB:All of a sudden there's a man in the house, you know, and he's the boss. So I was kind of frightened, you know. I stayed away from him. And he wanted to make friends with me. He called me once to give me a pretzel. So I looked at him, and I ran away. So he was telling my mother, so my mother talked me into go and get the pretzel from him. So I took the pretzel, and I ran away. (she laughs) I was scared, you know. He was Americanized, and we were from the small town, very small town. It was probably about a thousand people down there, that's all. That's what I think, you know.

MOORE:You mean a town that you said that was big.

TAUB:No. This was already when I was about twelve years old we went in to Zhitomir. We were, I was raised in a small, little town until then.

MOORE:I see. And the small town was named?

TAUB:Sakaloff[ph].

MOORE:Sakaloff[ph].

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:Do you know how to spell that at all?

TAUB:Uh-uh.

MOORE:Okay. When you say he was handsome, did he look, you have blue eyes. Did he look like you?

TAUB:Well, I think he had brown eyes. My mother has the blue eyes.

MOORE:I see. Okay. And is there a story about your father that you associate with your childhood, besides the pretzel story?

TAUB:No, no.

MOORE:He was not . . .

TAUB:Very much away from him.

MOORE:Yes.

TAUB:Very much away, we were scared of him, kind of, because either it's got to be so, if not so it's otherwise, you know.

But no, I don't remember him too much, because there was only one year that I remembered with us, when we went back.

He was in United States and he went, he came for a year to take us. He couldn't take us all. He went away by himself with the two daughters, and we were left down there with my mother. So I really don't remember, but when I came here, that was when we were together already. It was 1923 . . .

MOORE:Your mother's name was what?

TAUB:Ida Hasser. Ida.

MOORE:Ida Chace? Do you know how to spell that?

TAUB:Chace? C-H-A-C-E.

MOORE:And that was her . . .

TAUB:Jewish name.

MOORE:Her Jewish name. Right. And, now, what was her maiden name?

TAUB:(she pauses) Fuxman. Chace Fuxman.

MOORE:And how do you spell that last name, Fuxman?

TAUB:F-U-X-M-A-N.

MOORE:And what was her occupation?

TAUB:I don't think she, oh, she was a tailor also. She used to sew pants, make pants for a man. That's all I remember.

MOORE:What did she look like, your mother?

TAUB:She was a good-looking woman, very good-looking with blue eyes and light hair, and she was good to everybody. She was trying to do good for other people, and she was very nice.

MOORE:How would you describe her personality and temperament?

TAUB:I don't know. By us, down there, there's no such thing being, you know bad, or what. They did every day the same thing, to give the children breakfast and go away. They helped themselves. And she was always on the go, always away from the house. But I had, don't you remember growing up, like down here the children are different with the mothers. There's no such thing. Oh, we knew the mama went away, that's all, you know. And the other children

were taking care of the younger ones, the older ones and the younger ones. We were eight children. My mother had eleven. Three of them passed away.

MOORE:You had eleven children and eight survived?

TAUB:Yes.

MOORE:What was, do you have a story about your mother at all?

Anything that you tell about your mother that you associate with your childhood?

TAUB:Well, I don't know. I can't really remember.

MOORE:Any anecdote about her that . . .

TAUB:I can't remember.

MOORE:What about your brothers and sisters? Could you name them?

TAUB:Why, sure. (she laughs)

MOORE:All of them, from the oldest to the youngest?

TAUB:Yeah. Rose was the oldest, Shindel was the second.

MOORE:How do you spell that?

TAUB:Shindel? Uh, S-H-I-N-D-E-L, Shindel. And then Hina, that's Fanny. Her name was Fanny. The other one was Shindel.

Fanny, she was here. She came with my father here. So I haven't seen them for ten years. You know, he was, because when they sent the papers for us to come, so the war broke out, and we couldn't come. So we remained. It took us ten years till we came here, in between. I was only seven years old at that time, when my father went away. And then my father was down here since I was a little one about two or three years old, and he came one year, and so much of him I couldn't remember then.

MOORE:You got down to Fanny.

TAUB:Then it was Dovet[ph], a brother, Dave.

MOORE:How do you spell Dovet[ph]?

TAUB:No, Dave. (she laughs)

MOORE:Dave, okay. (they laugh)

TAUB:And then I had a sister Frances, and then a brother Zoldel, Z-O-L-D-E-L. And then I can, then another brother, Rudolf, and that's it. That's eight of us.

MOORE:And Rudolf is spelled R-U-D-O-L-F.

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:What about the house that you lived in? You had two houses, obviously. And this is a small town first.

TAUB:In a small town we have, like two rooms. One big room that we slept on the couch, on a day bed, you know. It was just two boards, you know, put up a bed, and straw, straw on the bed. No mattress, straw. And then we had a big cedar chest. On the cedar chest was also high, put on some blankets and sleep on top of it, and there was only two beds. We were eight . . .

MOORE:(referring to Mrs. Taub's microphone) It's better just to leave it like that. That's fine.

TAUB:We were, six of us left after my father took two of them away, and my mother, we were seven people. So we were two, in narrow places we were sleeping two of us on each one, so, you have over know, it was two on the bunk and two on the couch. We didn't have no couch, on the cedar chest. And two on the bed, and two in another bed, you know. That's it.

MOORE:How big were the rooms that you had?

TAUB:Well, the living room was a little bit bigger than this one. Then the kitchen was much smaller.

MOORE:Like, how big, in this room, would you say?

TAUB:I don't know. About fourteen, sixteen?

MOORE:Yeah. So how was your place, how was your house, what was it made of, the house?

TAUB:The what?

MOORE:The house that you lived in. What was it made of? Was it a brick house, or a wood house?

TAUB:No, it was from, uh, bricks and putty.

MOORE:Yeah.

TAUB:That's all.

MOORE:And how was it heated?

TAUB:Uh, you know what the bakers have an oven to make the bread? That's what we had, that oven. There's no other way. And then past the oven there's a little, ovenette, smaller one, that you put wood in there and everything, and that heats up the house. So you had to keep on going with wood all the time to heat it. Or if you're cooking or what, you have to cook it with wood, not with coal or anything like that. Here you broil with coal or something. We

had to use wood all the time.

MOORE:Okay. And was there a garden there?

TAUB:Yeah, there was gardens. Not by our house. It was other places that had gardens and had a field down there.

MOORE:So you didn't have your own garden?

TAUB:No. We didn't have our own house.

MOORE:And was there anybody else living in that house?

TAUB:No, just, I told you, we were seven of us alone, and then next to this . . .

MOORE:A little house?

TAUB:Yeah. Next to this was attached another one, the landlord was living down there. They were about eight people down there.

MOORE:And was, was it in the town itself, or was it outside?

TAUB:In the town.

MOORE:So you walked everywhere?

TAUB:Yeah, we could walk everywhere from there.

MOORE:What kind of furniture did you have in the house besides a cedar chest and then, in the kitchen, for example, what did you have?

TAUB:In the kitchen was just like is used now for the drawings, those tables. That's the kind of a table we had in the kitchen. My mother would just prepare food on it, and baking or whatever, cooking on it. We slept on that at night, and during the day it was something else.

MOORE:So you slept on the table, too?

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:You used everything.

TAUB:We used everything we could sleep on.

MOORE:Did you keep animals at all?

TAUB:We had one cow, because my mother had too many children to feed. She couldn't afford to get milk or butter or anything, so she got a cow. This cow provided us with everything, with milk, with cream, with cheese, with everything. Butter, until a certain time when she couldn't afford paying for the cow, to take care of it. Because she used to go elsewhere by the farmers, on the grass, to eat, and

they used to bring them back, you know, during the day, to milk them. When she couldn't afford to pay him for that, she sold it, and we remained without anything. We hardly had anything after that. So that's, it was hard living down there for us.

MOORE:Who did the cooking in the family?

TAUB:Huh?

MOORE:Who did the cooking?

TAUB:My mother.

MOORE>Your mother did. And what was your favorite food, do you remember, as a child?

TAUB:We were glad to have anything. There was no favorites down there. (Ms. Moore laughs) Everything was good, because we were always hungry, and everything was good. So there were no favorites.

MOORE:And did you, were you hungry a lot as a child?

TAUB:Well, many times going to bed without food.

MOORE:Yeah. Did you help cook at all? Did you help?

TAUB:Yes, I did when we came into Zhitomir. That was a small town

that I was talking about, the Sakal[ph]. But when we came into Zhitomir, that's when my mother used to go away for the day, or go away for the day and night, she used to travel, getting somewhere else, tobacco, coming into town, to Zhitomir, sell it, make a couple of dollars for us to buy bread and so. She was away. I had two sisters, a sister and a brother went away, then another sister went away. I was left the only one, with my younger brother.

So I used to cook. Then when my mother used to go away during the day, somewhere, something, I used to cook. So that oven, I used to put in some wood and try to lighten it to get it inflamed. So I used to sit and blow, blow, blow until I'd pass out (she laughs) to start the fire on it.

MOORE:How old were you then?

TAUB:I was about, about ten years old, I think. But then I'd stay on a little stool to reach the oven. I used to blow it all the time. Until then I'd cook it, you know, put the pot in there when the wood started, the fire. And I helped out that way. (she laughs)

MOORE:Well, you said that you lived in that small town.

TAUB:A small town. But this was already . . .

MOORE:Why did you move to a bigger town?

TAUB:Because the war was going to start. It came out that there was going to be a war, there's going to be killing.

MOORE:Which war?

TAUB:The First World War.

MOORE:The First World War.

TAUB:So my mother, what is she going to do with seven children, six children, in a small little town. She got no horse and buggy to run away. We got no place to run and hide. There was nobody down there, or relatives in that town. So she hired a farmer with a wagon and two horses, and she packed all the things up on that wagon, and we moved into Zhitomir.

MOORE:And what year was that, do you remember?

TAUB:I guess it was 1913 or '14? No, 1912? 1913 or '14. I don't remember exactly. (she coughs) Maybe it was even, yeah. It was around 1913 or '14, like from maybe '12, 1912.

MOORE:And where did you live then in that town? What type of place, dwelling, did you live in?

TAUB:Down there we had, it was a two-story building. There was four, two apartments upstairs, big ones, and there was five little apartments down below. Two rooms, a small little kitchen, smaller than we had down there, in a small little, the next room, the dining room, the living room, whatever, bedroom, whatever you want to call it. Because that's where we slept and that's where we ate, only two rooms. There was no bathroom. We had to go out in the outhouse down there. And that's how we moved.

MOORE:And you said that your mother began to sell things.

TAUB:Yes.

MOORE:What was she, this was during the war?

TAUB:Yes, it was during the war. Then the war started. After we came to that town, to Zhitomir, the war started, and she started selling things. She was sewing things. Whatever she'd get a hold of to do, to make money, to buy bread and milk for the kids, she did. She used to carry big baskets of fruit, vegetables, bread to the resorts. The resorts was out of town. You walk all the way down there with baskets. I used to help her, she'd be dragging the stuff to sell, and that's how she'd make a little money, we'd be able to eat. So then it was many times some fruits

and vegetables was left over or something. So there was a place, one street, half a block that you can stay on there like a stand, and sell it. I had it on the floor laying, spreading out some papers, and had the fruit or vegetables on the floor, and I was standing and selling it, helping her sell.

MOORE:Well, where did you get the fruits and vegetables?

TAUB:Well, she'd buy it from the market, from the farmers. They'd bring it in, yeah.

MOORE:I see, okay.

TAUB:So buying it from the farmers, and then we'd drag it all the way, we called it the doches[ph], you know, the, uh, and we'd go down there to sell it. So . . .

MOORE:What about your grandparents? What about your cousins?

TAUB:I don't know no grandparents. I never saw them. And only once my grandfather came to see his grandchildren. He was there for an hour. He gave each one a penny to go and buy some candy, and that's all, when I was a little one.
(she laughs)

MOORE:Where were your mother's and father's families?

TAUB:They were in Sloveshina[ph], a different town, miles, miles away. They were in a different town entirely. They were miles and miles away.

MOORE:What about your religious life? What was your religious life like?

TAUB:Well, we're Jewish, so my mother used to go to the synagogue whenever it was necessary, like on our New Year's Days, you know, other days, holidays.

MOORE:High holidays.

TAUB:High holidays, like Passover, you know. All the holidays that come up, and you go to shul, and she used to go. She didn't have time enough to go during the week to shul, to synagogue. So, but on those holidays she'd go to synagogue. We dragged along with her. I couldn't go to school because there was no school in the little town. So she had the butcher she used to get meat from, he had a daughter and she graduated college or whatever. She used to come and teach me. She was tutoring me.

MOORE:Now, you say "schul" or "school?"

TAUB:School, yes.

MOORE:School, okay.

TAUB:So I didn't go to no school down there. That woman, that girl used to teach me, you know, she was tutoring me. And there was . . .

MOORE:What did she teach you, for example? Did she teach you . . .

TAUB:Russian.

MOORE:Russian.

TAUB:Yeah. And Hebrew, Jewish writing, you know, that. But the boys, they used to go to Hebrew school. The girls aren't, go when you got money to pay. When you don't have money to pay, girls isn't necessary. That's the way it goes down there. They come first, the boys. My mother had three boys, they go to Hebrew school. She couldn't afford having me go too, so I, whatever I learned I learned from that girl that taught me Russian or Hebrew. Not Hebrew, the Jewish language, to write a letter and write the Jewish language and all that. But then when we left that little town and we came into the big town, to Zhitomir, I tried to register in a school twice, or more than twice, about three or four times, and they wouldn't accept me because I used to write, "My father is in the United States."

Oh, I'll go away anyway, I won't need that language, so they don't have to teach me. They wouldn't accept me.

I used to cry and cry, but that didn't help me, crying.

And I wasn't, but whatever I learned down there, whatever I knew was by myself like that.

MOORE:And how about for you, what was your religious life like?

When did you go to synagogue? Did you?

TAUB:Well, I used to go to synagogue. My mother was in synagogue, so I used to go in, like children go in and stay down there by the door, watch them, pray, watch them do this and that.

My mother used to say, "Do this, do this." We'd do it, that's all.

MOORE:Did you keep kosher at home?

TAUB:Me? Down here in the United States?

MOORE:No, no, there.

TAUB:Oh, sure.

MOORE:Back home when you were a child. You kept kosher?

TAUB:Yes. Kept kosher all the way through, when we came to the United States, we had kosher. My mother kept kosher all the time.

I kept kosher too, when I got married.

MOORE:What did you speak at home to each other?

TAUB:Yiddish, Jewish.

MOORE:Yiddish.

TAUB:Yeah, Yiddish.

MOORE:Jewish, okay. So that you learned Russian, did your mother
speak Russian well?

TAUB:Oh, yeah. She spoke it, but she couldn't write.

MOORE:Right.

TAUB:Because they're, you need money for everything, and we were
very, very poor, see.

MOORE:Did you experience any religious persecution or prejudice from
being Jewish there?

TAUB:Of course. Where don't you suffer from that. We'll suffer
all over, especially when the war started down there.
There used to be gangs, they used to get together and go
around killing Jews. It was on the Sabbath, and the men
were coming out from the synagogue with their shawls.
And there was one man, he had two little children. He
had, what do you call it when the back is up?

MOORE:Hunchback?

TAUB:Hunchback. A hunchback man, and he had two little children, two little girls. His wife had passed away. And he heard that they're coming around killing, so he was running home to save his children, so he come out from the synagogue. Right in front of the synagogue they killed him.

MOORE:And this was in your town?

TAUB:Yeah, in Zhitomir. They killed him, and eighteen more. There was about twenty . . .

MOORE:Who were "they," though? Who were they?

TAUB:The gang.

MOORE:Just gangs?

TAUB:Just like down here there's so many bunches, so many gangs down here now that they're killing, killing, killing.

MOORE:And they were particularly after Jews?

TAUB:Yes, after Jews. And they used to rape the girls if they'd catch them, Jewish girls. There was, a second or third cousin of mine was living up in a big, big building. The big, big building, through the, there was next door, next

door, you know, like down here there's all the apartments.

They used to break down the wall and make a hole to run through from one apartment to the other. The ones that were living in the apartments, and then put like a china closet or whatever in front of it, and when they heard them coming they used to move that away and run through from one apartment to the other, and they used to chase them through the apartments, until finally one time they caught that cousin and they raped her and she had a baby.

I don't know what happened with the baby, though. And they used to go around killing just Jews, and that's all.

And then all of a sudden it got quiet. They stopped.

So when they come from, I don't know, from out of town, smaller towns, farmers, or whatever they are. I don't know, but they came upstairs, and whatever, they used to steal, they used to break into stores and steal clothes, steal a lot of things. Whatever, like now they steal.

They take it, rather. And we heard them pulling the floors open and hide it under the floors, because we were downstairs, and upstairs there was somebody else living.

So they used to hide it under the floors.

MOORE:Hide what?

TAUB:The stolen stuff, like jewelry and whatever they were stealing

in the stores. Like one of them from upstairs was very nice to my mother. She said to my mother, "I got a man that needs where to sleep. Can he sleep by you?" My mother was scared, but she figures if she tells him, you know, to go and be nice to us, he won't hurt us, we'll be alive. So she said, "Okay." For being scared, she said, "Okay." So he slept about three nights by us, and then that time he was, one day he was cleaning his gun, and me and my younger brother were standing and watching him. There was nobody else in the house. Watching him, so he says to us, he saw we wore a shabby dress and everything, so he says, "Tomorrow," he says, he didn't say tomorrow, he says, "today we go, we go to the store. Would you want to come with us," he says, "and we'll put on nice clothes, new clothes on you, nice shoes." We wore shoes that were torn and everything. He said, "We'll put on new shoes, new clothes and all that." He says, "We'll dress you up. Would you want to go with us?" To me and my brother. We said, "No." Because it's stealing. We said, "No." So we didn't go. He didn't say nothing no more, but he asked us to go with him and he'll dress us. So they didn't hurt us. We were Jewish. But then, that day, that evening, rather, he went upstairs, and then during the night they were robbing and breaking into stores

and stealing things, and the next morning there was a big wagon out in the backyard, and they loaded up that wagon and they drove away. That's it. You know, they used to kill a lot. Then it was three days going on, the robbing, killing and everything. So at the end there was about a hundred people were dead, slaughtered, and everything.

MOORE:What year was this? Do you remember? Can you remember to place it?

TAUB:Yeah, Zhitomir. It was in Zhitomir.

MOORE:What year was it?

TAUB:Maybe it was '14 or '15. (a telephone rings)

MOORE:Hold on for a second. Okay.

TAUB:That's somebody downstairs. (a telephone rings) (she speaks into the phone) Hello? Hello? (break in tape) So then after this, we had the Germans come in. No, not the Germans, the Polish people coming in, men, you know, soldiers, officers, and raping. I was little, and those horses seemed to me so big, and they were sitting with the uniforms and the horses, and coming in from out of town, from way back, all the way into the mid-city. So my mother and a couple of other women got together. They

figured they'll be nice to them, so they won't hurt us.

So they brought them, came out with bread and salt, you know, that's good luck, and presented that to them while they were coming in, and they stopped and talked. And I was looking up like this because they were so big.

And . . . (break in tape) And the horses and them were so big, and they were so tall, and they promised to be good. They didn't want to touch nothing, nobody. The next day, during the night, they started killing. That was Polish soldiers, officers, you know, with their uniforms. And I was a kid about eight years old or ten years old, but they're still ten years old, and still I came down there, down here, ten-year-old, they know more than a fifteen or sixteen-year-old used to know down there.

So we were kids, we were scared. So I hear nothing about if they killed. And then the next three days they stopped killing and they started picking up the dead people. So they throw them in the wagons and they pick them up and throw them on the wagons, one on top of the other, one on top of the other, and then take them out of town, and dig a big grave and throw them in the grave.

MOORE:What, who were these people they killed?

TAUB:Polish people, they killed the Jews, Pollacks.

MOORE:All the people dead were Jews.

TAUB:Yes. There was no Gentiles. There was only one Gentile person was killed because of the Jews. He tried to prevent a Jew being killed, so they killed him. And they, he happened to be right next door to us where we lived, there was the two rooms, two rooms. And they were married. When they were getting married she came in in our house to get dressed because there were so many people in there to get dressed, they got married. They liked us. My mother didn't . . .

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

MOORE:When he saw someone abusing a Jew, what did he do?

TAUB:He tried to speak up for him. He tried to prevent him, the Jew from being killed, so they killed him. So they killed him, and then one of those killers saw his wife, because she was looking for him. She didn't know where he disappeared. So she was looking for him. They found him in a ditch, you know, miles away from the house in a ditch. And they cut off a finger because he had a ring, so they wanted the ring. They cut off the finger with it. And

then she, what can she do? The police were afraid to talk.

There was nobody there to talk to, to complain to. So she got him home, and there was the funeral. And she was taking pictures by the casket. She also came in in our house to change, because so many people were in there.

So many people were in there watching, you know, taking the pictures, you know, that it was such a pity. And when he was buried there was an orchestra in back of him following and playing very sad songs. And we used to go, too, in the back, because he was not Jewish, but he died because, trying to prevent the killing of a Jew. There were some nice people, but there was all this, we called them hyaganas[ph].

MOORE:How do you spell that?

TAUB:Hooligan? I wouldn't know.

MOORE:Hooligans.

TAUB:Huh? Hooligans, yeah. So they just get themselves up and go around killing, and nobody could stop them. So.

MOORE:What, then how, after you saw all this, and there was aggression toward Jews that you saw, very, did this have anything to do with you coming to the United States?

TAUB:No, no. This was what's going on down there.

MOORE:So how did you get here, finally?

TAUB:Oh, finally, well, let me say, in other words, there was a certain block that was stores, stores, you know. Like what do you call it down here, the flea market, where they were. So a man down there had a store, a candy store, ice cream, candy. So he had a faucet on there selling water, because we didn't have no running water. We used to carry it from the, from what do you call it, the, uh, what do you call it? The, uh . . .

MOORE:The well.

TAUB:The well.

MOORE:I mean, the pump. Yeah, the well, yeah.

TAUB:I get lost in words.

MOORE:Oh, you're doing fine.

TAUB:So we used to carry it from the well, the water with hammers, you know, with pails. And my brother used to, we had a big stick, you know. He'd hang up the, and he'd carry it that way, and I used to go carry water. But he was selling water through the faucet, for some people who could

afford to buy it. So they come in and they tell him that the faucet is running and should go and shut off the water there, from the store. He was home, the store was closed.

Everybody was hiding in the apartments. Apartments and little tents, like. So they tell him to go and shut off the water. So one of his daughters says she'll go and shut it off. He says no, he has to go. He's the boss.

He went out, he never came back. They killed him. They wanted to kill him because they . . .

MOORE:He was Jewish.

TAUB:Yeah. Only Jewish people were killed. That was the only Gentile that was killed, that he stood up for a Jew. So they killed him, too. The next, the day, when it got quiet, and they stopped killing, and they went, everybody went up to pick up the dead, so they picked him up, too, you know, there on the wagon. There was, they said there was a band. The name was Plurowitz. The name, from one guy, he must have been the leader, was that, so the whole gang was that name, Plurowitz. So they were coming in to kill. So eighteen Jewish boys, they were about eighteen to twenty to twenty-two years old. They got together, and they were running away. They caught him on the way, on the road somewhere. They put them out

on the road, they killed them all. And there was, one of them was our next-door neighbor's son. They were doing so many things. And then they were killing more in, on this side there was three buildings, (she gestures) one like this, one like this, and down there. And one, all the keys disappeared, and we didn't know what happened to him. So in that building there was about ten, twelve boys were hiding down there, under the stairs in the basement, I'd say. It was under the stairs, you know, under the building. It was just a hole down there. They were hiding down there. So they found them, somebody snitched. They found them, and they took them out in the backyard, and they put them out on their own. They were going to shoot them. And all of a sudden the Bolsheviks, you know what that is? They were coming in, and they start shooting. And their shooting is real hard and real heavy. And everybody stopped breathing, you know. And they were starting to be shot, so they ran away, those bandits. They ran away, those boys started running away. This was in their own house, you know, because they were alive, they were safe. Every time the Bolsheviks, it was a pogrom, as we say. The Bolsheviks would start coming in, and the shooting, and the banging with their artillery, that they used to get scared and run away, so that's how

they were safe. But I was, we were safe because that neighbor that was so nice, they gave out that all the Gentiles should put crosses on the doors, and non-Gentiles are not supposed to do nothing at the doors. Now, she had a cross on her door. She came and put on a cross on our door, and the next door. We were Jewish down here, and next door was a Gentile, too, we were between two Gentiles. But then the third and the fourth, the fifth was Jewish. Those people were with us. They put on an our doors crosses, too. You know, that we should be safe, to pretend that we are Gentiles down there. They saved us, really. So, and then when the Bolsheviks come in, as we called them at that time, the Russians, and they stopped killing, you know, because they weren't killing. And everybody started coming out from the holes and everything. We had under the roof on top of the apartment down there about eighteen people hidden down there. There was, that girl that I said she was raped, she was here then, her father and her brother were up there, and her sister was a youngster. She was with us in our apartment. So there was a lot of killings going on. And then when the Russians started being somebody, they had all the bandits, all the bandits away from, and we started living back again. So it was also a hard life, what we lived.

And then we got the papers from here. But we didn't get the papers from mail, to go to Poland, and from there we come to the United States. Because they didn't have no office in Russia from the American congress or whatever organizations, immigrants together here, so we had to go to Poland, so we sneaked the way through from Russia to Poland.

MOORE:How?

TAUB:Well, we, first of all, I was taken away with my younger brother one day, and we stayed for a month on a farm. But all of a sudden we're not home. And from that farm, after six weeks rather, we were taken on a wagon to Krastenstaut[ph]. That's a small town in Russia.

MOORE:How do you spell that? Do you know?

TAUB:(she laughs) I wouldn't know. Krastenstaut[ph]. That's right next to the border from the Poland and the Russians. So we had to go through the border down there. So in Krastenstaut[ph] we stayed only three weeks. Then my brother and I were taken away for six weeks. Then my sister joined us, and we went on. We went to Krastenstaut[ph]. We stayed down there for three weeks.

MOORE:How did you get there? By . . .

TAUB:Wagon, and a horse. So we sat in a wagon filled with straw so it would be soft, and the horse was pulling.

(she laughs) We got to Krastenstaut[ph], and then from Krastenstaut[ph] they took us to Rovno. That's Polish already, passing the border. So on the wagon that was driving, it was a Gentile girl, a farmer. She had only one hand. I don't know, somebody chopped off her hand, because when they catch them doing something wrong they do something like that. Anyway, she had one hand, she was driving two horses, and she was going with them so fast, as fast as she could. During the night we were sneaking through. So my brother and my sister and I went on that wagon. And there was another family, they had some gold or some, gold money or whatever. They baked some bread, and they hid it in the bread loafs. And when they came to Rovno they didn't have it. Somebody opened it up. They found out, and they stole the gold from them.

So they had empty bread. There was another family like that. Well, we were poor. We didn't have nothing. So whenever the people were, we stayed, you know, like a station. Some people took us in. They were getting paid good.

MOORE:By whom?

TAUB:By the, well, while my mother left us all in Russia, and she went away to Poland, because she had to get somewhere where there was an organization where they can take us out from there and bring us to here. So in Russia we didn't have that. Like down here they got the HIAS, they got other organizations, the Jewish welfares, and they helped those people. Like now there's so many Russians coming in, you know, they're being helped. So we were being helped on that, too. We came to Warsaw, so my mother was down there first. And from here they send us the money down there, so she had the money to pay off for bringing her to Poland, and paid some agents for bringing us three kids to Poland. And when she was going, she had received two hundred and fifty dollars at that time through the agency, so she can have, and get agents to bring us from Russia into Poland. So the agent that was taking her to bring her to Poland, they slept over on a farm in a house, in a farmer's house, and came in the morning. They were all packing to go on the wagon, they wouldn't take her. She should give them all the money she's got. But she needs that money for the kids to bring there. Why he's leaving her there? They were all on the wagon, she was the only one that he

was leaving, and then run away unless she gives them all the money, and she needs that money. She pays him enough, I think fifty dollars for taking her. At that time fifty dollars was fifty dollars, just like two thousand, three thousand now. So he wanted all the money. He was a Jew, that agent. But the farmer was not a Jew, of course. So he was leaving her there, and she was scared of staying alone with the farmer. He'll kill her. So she gave him all the money and he brought her to Warsaw, but he brought her to Warsaw, she didn't have no money. She went back to the HIAS. That's the name of the organization, the HIAS. They said, "We just sent you two hundred and fifty dollars." So she told them the story what happened. So they got mad. First they sent a telegram to the United States, and my sisters sent them money, sent again money. And that agent, and they took care of that agent. You know, we're going to work and work. When we came already to Poland, that's when we came, we were about to leave already. We stayed that year in Poland, in Warsaw. I stayed a whole year. So my mother was longer. She was about a year-and-a-half there. (she coughs) (birds are heard chirping in the background when Mrs. Taub pauses) So when they got on the stop, the way he treated her, and the way he was going to kill her and took all

the money away, so by the time, you know, things take time.

By the time we were about to leave, his brother comes over crying to my mother, she should go and say something good and they should release him. They had him arrested.

So she says, "I'm not going to go say anything good, because he was . . ." about to kill her, too. She says, "He wasn't saving my life or my children. He was trying to put us out in the dirt." She says, "I'm not doing nothing. He took away all my money, that I needed it."

Anyway, it was going on like this with this agent, he was arrested, and my mother wasn't going to go helping him. And, but he begged her, "Come with me and you'll see him in jail. Come with me and you'll see him in jail."

So she went with him once, and he started begging her and all that. She says, "You wasn't like that to me. What did you do to me? What did you say to me? You remember?" You know, and she got all that stuff. She wouldn't do nothing for him. But, anyway, we were about to leave, she couldn't remain for the trial, so we didn't know what happened to him down there. Probably he let go, because there was nobody to prosecute him. So that was what my mother done there. Then when we came, so my mother rented one room by a man, and we stayed. He had a nice house, that family. It was a family of four. And

we stayed down there and there was other people stayed down there. But we were staying down there and begging God he shouldn't send anybody in, because somebody could snitch and say there were some people going towards the border, across the border, and they don't belong here, or something, and they'd have us arrested and send us back, which has happened to some people. So, but one time there was, but he used to pay him off, so they used to go away.

But one time they insisted, so I ran in the bathroom and locked the door, and my mother wasn't home at that time, and my sister and brother, I don't remember where they were, but I know I hid myself in the bathroom. Mother didn't go in the bathroom, it's just a little hut (she laughs) in the house. So it took a long time to wait, through the doors, you know, I heard what was going on. A lot of noise, you know. They insisted, insisted, and then they insisted there's nobody here, "Just family, just family." And paid them off, and they left. Anyway, when we got our papers, then we weren't afraid no more. We got our passports, our papers, to go to the United States.

MOORE: So everybody wanted to come to the United States.

TAUB: Yes.

MOORE:And what did you know about the United States before you came?

What did you know?

TAUB:That my father and two sisters are here. That's all.

MOORE:And did he say . . .

TAUB:It was good down here.

MOORE:Where were they, in the States?

TAUB:They were here in Chicago.

MOORE:They were in Chicago.

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:And what did your mother say in preparation to you, about coming
to the States, about the States? Anything?

TAUB:No. We never discussed those things. There was no time.

MOORE:Did you speak any English at all?

TAUB:No.

MOORE:Did she?

TAUB:No.

MOORE:And what about . . .

TAUB:Jewish, we spoke.

MOORE:So what did you pack? What luggage did you bring with you?

TAUB:We didn't have no clothes. (she laughs)

MOORE:So you didn't have any luggage, really.

TAUB:We had one suitcase. That's all.

MOORE:And where did you leave for? What port did you leave from?

TAUB:From Poland we went to . . .

MOORE:Belgium, Antwerp.

TAUB:Belgium, no. No, no.

MOORE:I think on your record here it has, port of departure it has
written here Antwerp.

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:Yeah.

TAUB:That's, from there we took the boat.

MOORE:From Antwerp.

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:And the name of the boat was?

TAUB:Tyrrenia.

MOORE:Tyrrenia. T-I-R-R-E-N-N-I-A [sic]. Is that right? It's written right here. Now, getting from Poland to Belgium, did anything, how did you get there?

TAUB:By train.

MOORE:By train. And how was that?

TAUB:It was a full train with all the Jews down there that wanted to come to the United States.

MOORE:And was it packed?

TAUB:Families.

MOORE:Was it packed with people?

TAUB:Oh, yes. It was very much so.

MOORE:What was the atmosphere of your family? What were you thinking?

TAUB:Nothing. We were kids. We didn't know. We're going for a ride. We go here, we go there. (Ms. Moore laughs)

You know, now, children when they go someplace, they go fishing with their parents, or they go to the country with them. They know what they're doing. Down there, it's just like a routine. You have to, you go, no questions asked, no stories told or anything. You just go. Especially children. They don't have to know nothing. Only the big shots know anything.

MOORE:Do you remember anything of Antwerp when you were there?

TAUB:Yes. When we were going on the train, and when we were in Deustch, where you go with the wooden shoes.

MOORE:In Holland.

TAUB:Holland. So we stopped down there with the train. They have to refuel the train or whatever it was. Nobody was supposed to go and get off the train. They were supposed to stay on the train. And it took hours until they refueled. So one fellow thought he was smart, he got off the train. He was arrested. He was by the train. He was just off the train, standing on the ground. But his foot was on the ground. They arrested him, and he had a couple of hours down there till they cleared him. But none of us went off the train. We were afraid. But this guy took a chance, so he got arrested. So anyway, when

we came from the train, from there, and then we took the boat in Cherbourg, took the boat. And we got out of the boat, and everybody was fine. We got compartments with four beds in the two, lower two and upper. So . . .

MOORE:What class did you go over on?

TAUB:Third class. We were all the way down in the dumps.

(they laugh) Who could afford, of course, first or second class? We were down in the dumps.

MOORE:(she laughs) So you were down in third class. But you had your own compartment.

TAUB:Yeah. We were four of us. We had to have our own, you know. So my mother and my sister and my brother and I, we were all in the four. I was the first one that took sick, and I started vomiting, excuse me for saying so.
(she laughs)

MOORE:No, no, no. It's one of our questions. (she laughs)

TAUB:So I was vomiting for two days. I didn't eat nothing. I kept on vomiting. I was the first one, sorry, I was the first one that started it, and then my sister was helping me, you know, there were certain things to eat, and so I couldn't eat. She says to me, "Let's go into this dining

room. You're going to have something to eat." So I start going with her, and I came back the door, like the smell hit me, I start vomiting. I said, "Ma, I don't eat again."

And I didn't eat for several days. And I was the first one, my mother was second one that took sick, and my brother the third. When we got well, my sister took sick.

(they laugh)

MOORE:But did you bring food with you too?

TAUB:No! On the boat we didn't have no food. No. (Ms. Moore laughs) On the boat they were giving us hasarai[ph].

You know what hasarai[ph] is? Crap. (she laughs)

MOORE:Oh, crabs?

TAUB:Crap.

MOORE:Oh, yeah, great. (she laughs)

TAUB:So we came with the boat, we were gone with the boat, and all of a sudden one motor breaks. But we didn't call it the motor. It was two chimneys. You know, two chimneys? So we called it "the boat with two chimneys." We didn't know about the motor or anything. One chimney broke, you know, it's the motor broke down there. One chimney broke, so we went on one. We were delayed ten days, it took us

longer to come into port. We lost our turn to come in,
so we stayed on the boat for fourteen days.

MOORE:Wait a minute, how long all together were you on that boat?

TAUB:It was about twenty-five days, twenty-eight days, something
like that. Close to a month, three weeks.

MOORE:So because the motor broke you were delayed? And then . . .

TAUB:Delayed on the boat with the ocean. They couldn't go fast.
So it took them longer.

MOORE:Yeah. And was there talk about this on the boat when you,
do you remember them being, talking about that?

TAUB:No. We weren't talking. It's just we know that the boat was
broke, it's broke. (Ms. Moore laughs) It doesn't, you
know, it didn't mean nothing. It's broke, it's broke.
I suppose older people did or so, I didn't.

MOORE:So what year, when did that boat leave Antwerp? What year
and month. Do you remember?

TAUB:1923.

MOORE:1923. What month? Do you have any idea?

TAUB:It must have been, let's see, we got in October, it must have

been the beginning of September, the end of, what is that?
July?

MOORE:August.

TAUB:August.

MOORE:Yeah, here, okay. September you have, maybe August, 1923 is what it says. All right. Okay, so you were about eighteen then, right? You were born . . .

TAUB:I was going as fifteen. My mother didn't remember or what.

I was going as fifteen. When I came here, and I sent a letter to the Russian consulate in Washington, he sent me papers. He told me. And then we started figuring when I was born. My mother was figuring I was born the time when they were after my father to take him into service as a soldier. That was 1905. That was the time when the weather was like this and was like that, whatever it was, you know, she started figuring. So she says it must have been 1905. That's when I was here already, I found out I was eighteen. But this man was going on fifteen. She didn't know.

MOORE:So you had a birthday on the boat. Did you have a birthday on that boat?

TAUB:Who had birthdays then? I never had a birthday in my life.

MOORE:(she laughs) Now, what was the cabin like that you stayed in on the ship?

TAUB:Just like any other cabin, I think. It was just four bunks, and that's it.

MOORE:And what was the food like?

TAUB:Oh, I don't remember that. I know I didn't eat, so, but then when we started eating, they gave us all kinds of crap.

MOORE:You say that you took sick on the boat. Was it a rough voyage then?

TAUB:Sure, with one chimney and one motor. (she laughs)

MOORE:And how did, so you were sick, but did you have any good times at all on the boat?

TAUB:On the boat, no. The only good time I remember I had, I was a good checker player. So I was with the checkers on the boat, and sitting and I was playing with somebody, and that party kept losing and losing, and I just kept on winning and kept on winning. So there was a big crowd watching us. I was a kid yet. So I was really small,

you know, for that age, too. So, and everybody was watching us. So another man says he'll play. He plays, he loses, too. (Ms. Moore laughs) They played several games each. Then a sailor was standing and watching all that time. He wants to play with me. So he sits down and plays with me, and before he gets, he moves around, I'm through with him, I win again. (Ms. Moore laughs)

So they all lost and walked away from me. I didn't have no one to play with. That was the only time I remember that I had, I enjoyed playing checks with them.

MOORE:Well, do you remember seeing land for the first time, on the boat?

TAUB:What?

MOORE:Do you remember seeing land?

TAUB:No. We were underwater, but when we were on the boat came into Ellis Island, that's when we saw land and the big buildings and all that. And then we were looking, we didn't see no big buildings by us in the old country.

MOORE:Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:What was the reaction to that on the boat?

TAUB:Oh, everybody was on the deck, you know, looking at it, and we were so proud. And they didn't know why some were singing, some was looking, some were crying. You know, it was very, very dramatic.

MOORE:Was that the first thing you saw coming in was the Statue of Liberty?

TAUB:Yeah, well, from far away, like from here you see the building over there, you know. You look at it, and, "That's the place where we're going! That's the place where we go!" You know. We were all proud and waving from the minute we . . .

MOORE:And then you got there and you had to wait.

TAUB:We had to wait. We were on the boat, but then they . . .

MOORE:And . . .

TAUB:Still we lost our quota to get in. You know, just so many people can get in. This boat is first, this boat is second, and we lost our turn. We didn't come in. We were fourteen days late. So we had to wait for our turn, so we were on the boat. There was, people come around with the small

boats, you know, and talking to some of their friends.

I couldn't hear them what they were saying, but they were talking up and down, you know . . .

MOORE:How did your father find out about what you were doing out here?

TAUB:Well, my father, down here, he received a letter from a woman down there that she was on the outs with my mother. They had words down there, I don't know what it was about. So that woman went and sent to my father a letter that my mother is dead. Because there was a lot of people dead. That was nothing new. She was there, so what can he do? So he got married again. But my sisters, the two sisters that he had here with him kept on saying, "Mother is not dead. Mother is not dead." They couldn't see that their mother should be dead. So, and he didn't believe them. He believed that woman. So he got married again, so we didn't hear from him at all until we got here. When we got here, so us and him came to some friend's house, and we met on there, and we wanted him back home, we wanted our father. I didn't know what a father was. I only knew him for one year. So he divorced the other woman and came back home. So we met him here. I didn't know him.

MOORE:What about on Ellis Island, though. Wait, tell me about what happened when you went through Ellis, what was that like?

TAUB:So Ellis Island, when we come off the boat finally, so we were all walking upstairs. There's doctors standing on top down there and they're watching the people, how they walk, you know, to see if there's nothing wrong with them. (she coughs) Well, us three kids, we walked up. They saw it was nothing with us. They checked our eyes, they checked our ears, they checked here and there, they didn't find nothing wrong with us, and they let us go. So we go one way. My mother had a finger, her nail, her finger caught in a door, and the nail turned black. And before we left she went to a doctor because she got to go to be checked. Nothing should be wrong with you when you come in. So the doctor says, "That nail has to come off." So she figured it would be better, they took it off. They took it off, so it went a bump, in black, you know, it was ugly-looking. So when she came here everything was okay with her but the finger. They got to test it. They took her into the hospital to test it. They took tests. There's nothing wrong with it. So they kept her there for three days or ten days, I think. And, till they got, in the meantime we wouldn't go away without her.

MOORE: So you were there.

TAUB: We waited for her. So after she got through down there, they united us together, and we got off the boat. How we got off the boat? From the HIAS. That's a Jewish organization in New York. They came, and they took us. My sisters from here couldn't go out there to New York. They had little children, two and three years old, one and two years old, and one of them had a three-year-old. They couldn't go. So they took us in. And that was on a Friday when they took us off the Ellis Island. And that Friday it was the day before Yom Kippur, in the evening was Yom Kippur, our Jewish holiday. And so it was, we couldn't get on the train to ride the whole night because that's Yom Kippur, it's a holiday. We're not supposed to ride, the Jewish people. So the HIAS, then, they took us in and gave us supper. Which it was too late for us already to eat. It was Yom Kippur. We don't, we eat supper at a certain time, and then we can't eat no more until the next day in the evening, the fasting. So, but us children, we ate. My mother didn't eat no more. She went to the synagogue down there, and then overnight was the next day we fasted a whole day, so they didn't have to serve us. But then suppertime, we had, we ate, and

we slept overnight again. On Sunday morning they gave us breakfast and gave us, in bags, they put in some salami and bread and other things, you know, and put us, and took us to the train and put us in the train and sent us to . . .

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

MOORE:All right. Now, you said that your sisters had little children, so that you got on the train and you came from . . .

TAUB:From the train, to meet us at the train. So from the HIAS, they came and met us, because we had names on our chests, and they saw who we are, we told them who we are. They asked us, sisters, you know, called them by the names. First Rose, then (?). They said they couldn't come. We're taking you into the HIAS now. What can we do? We go. Whatever they tell us, we left and we went. We didn't start thinking of anything. So we went to the place, and we stayed down there. It was on a Sunday morning, and that was Monday that we were there, and we were watching. We stayed overnight down there the next day. No, it was the same day around, in the evening. My sisters came down there with a car. One of my sisters, the older one, her

husband had a car. They came with a car and when they came by the door they had the door locked. By the time they came to unlock the door, the people from the HIAS, we were standing by the door. We said, I was hollering, "Ooh, that's Rose, that's Fanny, that's Rose, that's Fanny!" You know? Because I didn't see them for ten years, but I remembered, my sister Fanny was light, blonde hair, blue eyes, long, blonde hair, and my sister Rose was dark, she was the opposite. So, but this one was older, and one was younger. You see, I'm in between. It was one, two, three between them, you know. Anyway, then they opened up the door, and you know how it is. You start . . .

MOORE:Opened the door of what?

TAUB:Huh?

MOORE:Opened up the door of what?

TAUB:Of the HIAS, like the corridor.

MOORE:I see, yes.

TAUB:You know, to go out outside and inside. Well, to go on inside you can't come in unless somebody of the HIAS, a person comes over, so when they opened up the door for them, so

you can imagine what was going on. How can they get in? And we didn't know what to say first. You know, you get so lost, as they say (Yiddish), that's when you get lost. So, and then they took us to their house. So my mother and my older sister went by the older daughter, the older sister. Me and my brother, he was younger than me, he went to my other sister. We split up.

MOORE:Which sister did you go to? Were you . . .

TAUB:I was with the younger sister.

MOORE:Who was . . .

TAUB:Fanny.

MOORE:Fanny.

TAUB:Yeah. And my mother . . .

MOORE:Was it a shock for your mother to know that your father had re-married?

TAUB:No, she kind of understood that. Because of that other woman, knowing what she is, and she heard that, she sent a letter to United States, but she didn't know what she sent in that letter, what she said. So, but the children knew that when it's time, that opening, when they started

receiving mail, we used to send them mail. They got the mail, they came to him, "Look, there's a letter from Mom."

But my mother didn't write it, because she couldn't write.

See, down there you got the paper and everything, when you don't have no money, especially she came from a very, very tiny town, maybe about a hundred people down there.

That's all. So she couldn't write. She couldn't write.

So us children, like me, whatever I got from that young lady, so I knew how to write. Even today I still know how to write Jewish, and that's because of her, you know.

I don't know where she's at, or if she's alive or not.

I don't think so. But that's where I learned, as a kid, and I didn't learn much. I was one semester, I think, I was with her. But I got it in my head. I wanted to know, and I learned. So I still write Jewish. Like I got now some nephews in Israel. I used to write to them letters all the time in Jewish, and they'd write back.

But now it's kind of I'm tired of writing, I'm tired of everything. You know, at this age, when you get to be old, everything after it.

MOORE: So what about, when you got to the States, what was your father doing here then?

TAUB: He was a tailor.

MOORE:He was a tailor in Chicago.

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:And what, tell me, you're about, well, you thought you were fifteen. Did you go to school in this country, then?

TAUB:No. Who could afford to go to school? I went to work.

MOORE:You worked? And what did you work as here?

TAUB:I was working as, I don't know. You know Chicago? You don't know Chicago. Well, there's Ogden Avenue where there's a jail down there. There's a great, big factory across the street.

MOORE:How do you spell the name of that street?

TAUB:Ogden?

MOORE:Yeah.

TAUB:O-G-D-E-N.

MOORE:Oh, Ogden, okay, yeah. Uh-huh.

TAUB:So I went down there to work, and I worked down there for six weeks only. My sister went there, too, to work. We went to the HIAS. They gave us a job down there. They sent

us over there, and they took us. My sister was working on different stuff. I was working on different stuff. But I was so anxious to learn English that I didn't care. So the foreman down there, he used to talk, you know, tell me what to do and what to, and he used to teach me to talk, so I used to talk with him. So he'd pick up something, "What's this?" I'd say what it is, a screwdriver or a drier or a hammer or whatever. It was tools. I used to say, he'd tell me first. But then an hour later, an hour later or two hours later he'd ask me, "Sophie, what is this?" So I'd say it. And that's how I learned to speak English. My sister spoke English, but not as good. (she laughs) So, and that's how I learned things, by him telling me. So the boss foreman, manger, rather, came in one time, and he heard me talking with him, and he saw him and he winked me like this I shouldn't talk, and I didn't know what he meant. So I said something to him, and he comes over and he says, "You come downstairs right now," the manager. I'm fired. So I says, "Why? What did I do?" He says, "Come downstairs right now. Get your coat and hat. Come downstairs." At that time you had to wear a hat, a coat, years, those years. So I took it, so my sister started hollering, "You have to talk! You have to talk! You have to talk!" So I went

downstairs and they made out my check for the time I was working. Oh, I lost a job because I was trying to learn something. So I went home, and I come home and I told them I was fired from there. So my sister comes home.

When it was time to go out from work, I left, it was around three o'clock or two o'clock. She left five thirty, after work hours. And she cries and cries and cries, "She has to talk to him. She has to talk. So they fired her, they fired her. Now she got no job." And she was working, she was making down there fifteen dollars a week, I was making down there fourteen dollars a week. Eight hours a day. I work Saturday, too. Half a day. We had a lot of money. (she laughs) So my mother doesn't say anything, that you're fired and there won't be no money, and here we want to save money. We got to get clothes.

We got to pay off what they paid for us to come here.

So my mother didn't say nothing, but where I stayed with my younger sister, so she took me the next day to the HIAS again, and they gave me a job at Clinton and Madison.

There was a leather goods place, and he was running, they were making briefcases down there, schoolbags, briefcases, satchels. So it was hard work, but they took me in. I spoke to him in Jewish at the beginning, but then as it was going on he always used to talk to me in

English, the boss, the other workers down there, and I learned it, how to speak. So I worked down there for, let's see, till I got married, till about eight months, no, six months after. It was a year till I almost, almost a year that I worked fourteen years, rather, but I quit before I got married.

MOORE:And when did you get married?

TAUB:Where?

MOORE:When?

TAUB:1936, January the 12th. So I got pregnant, so I quit the job.
I was three months pregnant.

MOORE:And your husband was American?

TAUB:No, he was also a foreigner, but he came as a kid, and he went to school.

MOORE:From where?

TAUB:From Russia.

MOORE:Oh, yes.

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:And what did he do for a living?

TAUB:What did he do? When I met him he, I don't know what he was doing when we were going out off and on, just like friends, that's all. But then they sent him away to a camp. There was a camp at that time for the boys that they don't have no work. They're not in the service. They sent him to a camp, so he was in the camp. That's when he got me. He used to write me letters. Ooh, pretty soon they're going to be sent to war and this and that. So we had, my mother had a cousin here that had a laundry factory. So they needed drivers. At that time drivers used to go to the houses to pick up the laundry and bring it back. That was a nice living for them. So she went there and asked him if he could use a driver or whatever, and they had to give him a job because if he comes out from there there's no job. So he took him and he gave him a job, and then we got married. (she coughs)

MOORE:Briefly describe, looking back, when (?) to go back a little bit. When you came from the boat, you came on the train to Chicago. Where was your, what type of place, name the place that you stayed at. Where did you, what type of building or house or . . .

TAUB:I stayed with my younger sister and my younger brother on Auckley[ph]. It was 12-something on Auckley[ph] Boulevard.

MOORE:And what type of place was that?

TAUB:It's an apartment. She had two bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen and a living room.

MOORE:And where was your father living? What type of place was your father living at that time, do you remember?

TAUB:He was with his wife yet.

MOORE:And he had an apartment?

TAUB:Whether he had, he lived with his wife. Of course they had an apartment.

MOORE:And so, all right. So, and what other details, like you never mentioned when you were at Ellis Island, what the conditions were those three days when you were kept there.

TAUB:We were ten days there.

MOORE:Ten days, sorry.

TAUB:(she coughs) Excuse me. Uh, the conditions was okay for us. We were just in the station, like, for here we go,

and here we're here. One minute we're here, the next minute we go, you know. You were just sitting on your bundles, waiting to go.

MOORE:And where did you sleep?

TAUB:Well, there was, right now I can see the room over there. There was, a lot of people had to sleep. There was a lot of rooms to sleep in. But that room my sister and I used to sleep in, we were about eight people or so, or six people. There were only two cots in there. So we came the other way to get one cot, and my sister and I were sleeping in one cot. There was another cot for the other people, and the others were sleeping on the floor. My brother used to go where the men are, because he was as old as a man at that time, maybe fourteen or twelve years old. He was about fourteen, I think, at that time. So he used to go with the men. So he'd sleep over there. How it was in there, I don't know. But in the morning, right away he'd come to us. So we used to go down in the great, big room, bigger than this, longer. It could be all the way to the next street down there. Big tables used to be, real big, long tables. And everybody used to go sit at a table, and they'd get some food. What kind of food it was, I don't know. But I remember it was cereal,

and we'd see, remember I said about the bananas that was in the big stores, the luxury stuff? And I'd see big bowls of Jello. We never saw that, we never ate it. And it was shaking, you know. Oh, it shivers, it shivers, you know. And then great, big bunches of bananas, with the stems, you know, dozens of bananas laying on some of the bowls down there. We'd say, "What is it? What is it?"

Then some colored people come in down there. They'd take one, they'd peel it and eat it. We'd look at them, they're eating it. "They're eating it, what is that?" You know, at that time we didn't know what that is, and neither did we know what Jello is. We'd say, "It's (Yiddish)." You know, in Jewish, "It shakes, it (Yiddish)." Because we couldn't talk English, so we talked among us Jewish. We'd say, "Look at, it (Yiddish), it's (Yiddish)." So that's how it was. And then we went and they gave us food down there at these big, long tables. Now they've cut the dining room up, you know, to a third of it, what it was. It was a great, big room and they cut it in half, or whatever they did.

MOORE:Or maybe you're older now. It doesn't look so big.

TAUB:Yeah. (she laughs) No, no, no, no. I was down there twice, and I told them down there, there was, a lady was coming

around telling us about things down there, and I told her, "This room was larger. It was so long, with long tables, with the Jello, with the bananas." She says, "Yeah." She says, "We cut it down in half."

MOORE:So you were right.

TAUB:And then I showed, I showed her the bedroom where we slept.

Now it's just four walls, the doors are off, you know, no doors on it or anything, open, and four walls, three walls rather. So I said, "That's the room where we stayed overnight." She says, "Yeah." And I tell her what it was in there, she said, "Yeah." She agreed with me, she knew what it was, because I remember it different. And then I told her about another room down there that I remember. Everything I did she says, "Yes, they remodeled it." They remodeled it an awful lot. It's not like it was when we came in.

MOORE:Was it clean when you came in?

TAUB:Well, it wasn't dirty, but it wasn't fancy. You know, it was just plain. Plain walls, plain bars, you know, plain floors.

MOORE:Could you briefly tell me, also, we got up to when you got

married. You had children? Did you have children?

TAUB:Yeah.

MOORE:How many?

TAUB:Two of them. I lost one. I would be three. I had the boy, this one here with the uniform, you see over there. (she gestures) And then I had another one eighteen months later, and he was almost two years old when he died. Then six years later I had that little one on the bottom, the one over there. So . . .

MOORE:What are they doing now?

TAUB:One of them lives in New York with his wife. He's got two children. And his son is in San Diego, San Francisco, I don't know. San Francisco, I think. He just moved a couple of months ago. And we went away traveling to see the world, like, you know. He hasn't been around, so he wanted to see around. He's a bookkeeper, what you say, an accountant.

MOORE:An accountant.

TAUB:I couldn't think of it at that minute. He's down there, he's about twenty-eight years old. And I got a granddaughter,

she's in Colorado. She's working down there. She was a civil engineer. She gave that up for waitress. She doesn't like civil engineer. She was working for about five years at it, and she said, "That's terrible." She hasn't got no time for herself. She works on Saturdays and Sundays and evenings, she's got to climb up top and look and see what they do and when they do it right. She couldn't take it no longer. And then she was a young girl, and the men were rough and dirty, and so she quit that. She's a waitress now.

MOORE:Your daughter, is your daughter . . .

TAUB:It's my granddaughter.

MOORE:Yeah, but your daughter . . .

TAUB:I got no daughters.

MOORE:Oh, yeah, you have two boys.

TAUB:Two boys.

MOORE:And the younger son?

TAUB:He's a, for building, what do you call it? An architect.

MOORE:An architect.

TAUB:I'm sorry. I lose myself.

MOORE:No, no. We've been going for a long period now.

TAUB:I'm too old.

MOORE:No, no. I mean it.

TAUB:There's, now there's things that I want to say and I forget
what to say.

MOORE:I'm young and that happens to me. (she laughs)

TAUB:He's an architect. Yeah, he's got his own place.

MOORE:One other question is when your family, did any of your family
members ever want to go back to Russia?

TAUB:No!

MOORE:(she laughs) Okay.

TAUB:Who wants to go back to the suffering?

MOORE:(she laughs) All right.

TAUB:No, no.

MOORE:So would you say that your family was happy they came here?

TAUB:Of course we were all happy. I'm the only one left of my whole

family. They're all gone. All my sisters and brothers, and my mother and father, and my little boy.

MOORE:Did your mother adjust to life here?

TAUB:Oh, yes. She liked it here very much. She didn't go to work.

MOORE:Did she learn English?

TAUB:Well, she spoke a little bit because she learned it from us from when we used to talk with the other children, grandchildren used to talk to her, when my sisters still were here. You know, she learned that from them, and they used to learn Jewish from her because some things they couldn't say or she couldn't say. They get together somehow and learn from one another. But I pick up the language right away at work. So I went to night school for a while, and then it got so hard on me that I had to work and run, from work I used to go straight to night school, come home ten o'clock, eleven o'clock. So, and I kept on going until a couple of guys from the, from high school, they followed me with a car, they wanted me to go with them in the car, they'll take me home, and I didn't trust them. And there were about six of them or five of them in the car, and I was walking. You wouldn't know the place, though. Ooh, it's about two, eight, about

fifteen blocks. That's two miles, I used to walk. So, and they followed me with the car all the way to the house.

The next day when I was in school they tell me how I went and where I went and where I live, because they followed me. I told that to my mother. I said, "I'm afraid to go. There's five, six of them in a car. I don't want to go no more. So I stopped school for that. So, but I went to night school for a while.

MOORE:Well, you say, before the interview you said you had a very rough life . . .

TAUB:I did.

MOORE:But how do you look at your stay in the United States? You have no regrets?

TAUB:What do you mean?

MOORE:I mean, about coming here, at all? You don't regret coming here?

TAUB:Oh, no, no. I got back, I got, like a human being down here. I worked, I made money, and my mother used to go away and buy a couple of dresses for me. We didn't go to the store to try it on or anything, but she'd bring it home and we'd be satisfied. She'd bring three dresses, two

of them for the older sister, one for me. And boy, I was so happy with one dress. Here, already, I was working, making money, a pair of shoes. I got here, when I first got here my brother-in-law took me, didn't take me, he went to the shoe store and picked up some shoes down there and brings it home for me to wear. I had a big foot, always. He couldn't, what kind of shoes did he bring me?

Those shoes, there was a strap down here. You know, the children's shoes with a strap. He buy me those shoes.

Those shoes were not for me. He went three, four times, six times, back and forth, which is, I said, "Take me to the store so we can match it." So he was ashamed of me, to bring me to the store, because of the rotten shoes I had. (Ms. Moore laughs) Well, that's true. So he brings in several pairs of shoes to the house to match me a pair of shoes. So that's how it was until finally I say, "No." I actually go to the store. I went. Not with him. My mother. We used to go look in stores and on the street, go into stores and buy shoes. So, it was hard for me until I got adjusted, but I got adjusted right away. I liked it here. (she coughs) I was myself. I was a person then here. I was working. I was big. I was making money. My mother didn't go to work no more. She didn't have to support us. We used to work, my sister

and I. My brother was too little. He went to school, to grammar school. And we used to, we got an apartment afterwards. Let's see, we came in, and about four months later after we were here we got an apartment. A garrett, two rooms on top of a house, this roof. (she laughs)

So that's what we got. We got in down there, and then my father finally straightened out with my mother, and he come back, so then we went into an apartment on Irving near Division Street. You wouldn't know there, where it is. So we got an apartment down there. It was two bedrooms, a living room, a dining room and a kitchen. You know, small rooms, but there was rooms. So my sister and I had a bedroom, my father and mother had a bedroom, my brother had a couch, a day bed, rather, in the dining room he used to sleep. So from there we went into another building, to another apartment. You know, we're making money. My father got back home, so we got a better apartment, but they were all lousy. (they laugh) It's not like this one here.

MOORE:Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the Ellis Island for taking time to speak with us.

TAUB:Huh?

MOORE:I'd like to thank you on behalf of the project.

TAUB:Thank you. You know, my son is up in New York. He goes down there where I was. So whenever I come down there he takes me. "Come on, Ma." So the last time I was down there they took a wheelchair and they pushed me around, and that was because I can't walk no more. I walk around here. I walk on the streets with a cane, but I'm in pain when I'm walking. But I'm not walking so much. Down there you have to walk.

MOORE:You have to really walk in the city.

TAUB:So they rented a wheelchair and they pushed me around in this wheelchair, him and his wife, my daughter-in-law and my son. And they go down there often. They're in touch with them.

MOORE:I'd like to thank you for helping us out. This is Kate Moore in Chicago on April 25, 1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project with Sophie Dobrin.

TAUB: Thank you.

MOORE:Thank you. Wow. That's a story, isn't it?

TAUB:Oh, isn't it now.

MOORE:That's a story . . .