

NPS-17

ROSE KEISLER LIEBERMAN
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ROUMANIA, 1900
AGE 6
PASSAGE ON "THE GRAF WALDERSEE"

LIEBERMAN: My name is Mrs. Elias Lieberman. My birth certificate from Roumania calls me Rosa Kiesler, K-I-E-S-L-E-R, but the official there wrote C-H-I-S-L-E-R using the so-called method of the K, the CH, using CH instead of K, so my name on my birth certificate, August 26, 1893. I was born in a suburb of the city of Jassy, Roumania. We happened to be summering there, and from the accounts that my mother told, they put me in a bucket of ice water (she laughs) to revive me. I don't know where they got the ice water. I presume it was well water. And I revived (she laughs) and here I am. We lived in the city of Gaesti for a number of years, and it was a cosmopolitan city with beautiful parks, a market the equivalent to the market in Paris because my mother used to say, "Let us go to the Halles," H-A-L-L-E-S. And I still have the smell of the produce in my nostrils, the greens that the peasants used to bring into market and the various cheeses on vine leaves, and long loaves of French bread. Also round loaves of bread. But they never used to wrap it and I remember

going with our servant, Stephanie, to the market and she used to carry this round loaf on her belly, and, of course, nowadays I would have been mortified, with public health (she laughs) regulations they probably would have (she laughs) ostracized us. And I was one of eight children and I was the seventh. I was the seventh. The eighth was my brother who is still living here in New York City, Dr. Max Kiesler. And (break in tape, music) crowding out others that I don't really know which is the most important, but since this pertains to immigration, I want to tell you about the few months before we came. Now I'm talking about my sixth birthday. That was August. In September my father took me to the School of the Sacred Heart. It was a Catholic school, but children who could afford it, children of Jewish parents who could afford it, went to those schools. Otherwise they had to have tutors because there wasn't a good public school system. And they either have tutors who would come in by the hour, but if you were admitted to the Catholic school you were fortunate because the instruction was excellent, and you had to, well, my sister, my other sisters had been pupils, so I guess they didn't have to examine me much. But I remember walking along this hazy summer day and we passed the little alley, and I still remember burdock leaves on the ground and there was a little cove and there were a number of children, and I pulled my father over to see what they were doing, and this has remained with me all the time. They had a little puppy on the table and he was really emaciated and a very sick little dog, and they were trying to revive him with I

don't know what, and my father just pulled me away. But that scene is so vivid in my mind. I just see it, and especially trampling over the burdock leaves. Well, then we went on to the school and I wasn't very anxious. I was kind of frightened. And when we came to the courtyard, I saw these young girls, lots of them were what they call boarding school, it was a boarding school too, and had pupils which they called "externot." Now I would have been externot. That is a pupil just coming in for the day, but there were pupils there who boarded there in this Catholic school and they had navy blue dresses and black sateen aprons and their hair was braided and under a net, and the heavy mesh net. And they were very friendly and they wanted to take me in hand and I pulled back. I was very recalcitrant. I pulled back and wouldn't utter a word, and they came with little flowers and little papers just to make me feel at home. And I rebelled. Then I saw this formidable looking woman coming down, she was the Mother Superior, and she came into the courtyard to see the cause of all the commotion. Here is this little Jewish girl coming in and making (she laughs) a fuss. And I just, something that I have never done afterwards, got, laid down on the floor in this courtyard and cried out loud and cried and cried and cried and I told my father that "I'm frightened, I'm frightened." Well, the Mother Superior said, "Take her home." And that was the end of my schooling in Roumania. Two months after that we were on a ship from the port in Germany, Hamburg. My father must have suddenly decided that the method of making a living

there, although he was always bolstered up by his own father who had a very fine business, he was a grain merchant and he had some ships on the Bosworth and Poppa used to really be sort of a super salesman for him, but it was nothing on his own, nothing on his own, it and I guess must have, it irked him and he had tried other things and finally somebody must have said, "Why don't you go to America?" And at that time it was almost to be insulted to say, "Why don't you go to America?" because only people in dire circumstances or fugitives or so went. But he had heard of some people who had gone and they did well, and my mother was a fine, cooperative wife, and I guess he didn't have to bludgeon her and she must have agreed with him. And there were preparations made because, by the looks of our luggage, as I remember it , I think, well, it occupied a little truck. The man who called for us at Ellis Island came with somebody, with a friend with a little truck, a horse-drawn wagon I would say, but it was the size of a, oh, much larger than a parcel post wagon, much larger, because it also had benches in it for us to sit. Well, I'll go back to our departure. Of course, it was a very terrible thing for the, to say goodbye to everyone and I remember my father taking me and my younger brother, Max, to the city of Roman, which was a port to the Black Sea, and there was my grandfather, very, very tall man, and I have in my hand now something about him which was written on the 22nd of February 1878. And it is a passport that he had asked from the Consulate of Austria-Hungary. He wanted permission to go to Austria-Hungary for business and he

would remain there for some time. Now he had had eight daughters and two sons, but on this voyage he took his wife and five of the children, and I see on this passport that the third of the children was my father, Isaac, and it gave his birth as 1858. So by the time my father got to America, he was still a young man because it was the difference between 1858 and 1899. And I was talking about the city of Roman and my grandfather Mendel Kiesler, was walking along a sort of a little boardwalk and he met a friend and he said, "This is my son, Isaac. He's going to America. And this is his youngest," pointing to my brother, and in Yiddish or Hebrew they called it a "luzinik", my youngest. And I stood there and didn't want to be just another. I said, "Yes, but I'm the luzinik of the girls. (Ms. Nash laughs) And my grandfather picked me up, I remember, and hugged me. And that was one of the memories. Another memory in Gaesti, I remember in front of our house there were periodic parades, religious parades of the various denominations, mostly Greek Orthodox because the Roumanians are Greek Orthodox. And I was standing on the curb. I must have been about four. I was standing on the curb of the street. It was Strada Anastacia Pana, the name of the street was. (she laughs) I was there with my sister Sadoni, an older sister, and she was holding my hand, and this parade came along, this religious parade with icons and so on, and the chief, I wouldn't know what you call him, but he was the priest. If you recollect, you know that they had very long white beards, the Greeks, so, it was the Greek Orthodox, and part of them, they wore

mitered hats and very long, white beards, and he must have been an old man. And he passed by and he came along the curb and he picked me up and he kissed me. (she laughs) So there I am going to a Catholic school, kissed by a (she laughs) Greek Orthodox priest, but still a very observing Jewess. And we made these preparations, let's see this was about two years before with the Orthodox priest. But it just came to me because I was thinking of the street, and the preparations that went on, the packing. We took everything with the exception of household things. We didn't take any silver. I don't know, we must have been told that it wasn't wise. No silver, but we took all of the bedding, pillows.

NASH: (?)

LIEBERMAN: I don't know. It was something that it would be stolen, could easily be stolen. Better to sell it. They said better to sell it or give it away and use the money. And we had pillows and down comforters and quilts, the quilts that were filled with lamb's wool. But the lamb's wool wasn't the lamb's wool that we use here for white. It was sterilized evidentially, wool as it came off the sheep's backs. It was not pure white. And I remember especially a very beautiful pair of quilts that was covered with robin's egg blue fine mohair. And there were two red silk quilts and they had buttons along the edges, about six or eight inches in because there was no such thing as a top sheet. Your top sheet was made to fit the bottom of the quilts and they were buttoned on. And these large mother of pearl buttons. And all kinds of tablecloths. And this was sad, parts of trousseaus that belonged to my sisters, who were sixteen and seventeen and nineteen, and it was a

customary to have a hope chest, and parts of these trousseaus were taken along. I still remember my sister, Rachelle, we called her Ray here, she had a tea service with violets embroidered, and she died a number of years ago here at the age of 89, and when I was going through her effects, I found those little napkins with the violets. She had never married, and it was quite nostalgic and sad to see that, somebody saving for a trousseau. And we took, of course, all the clothing, all the fur-lined garments, my father's very heavy coat that was lined in beaver, and my mother's black cape lined in squirrel, and other things, and all of her dresses. For years afterwards my sister Elsie and I, Elsie was two years older, Elsie Belmont, she is two older than I am, but for years my mother was able to make from those fine dresses that she had bought that was full, ample, and with trains, and we had dresses made. We had white dresses, I remember, and especially lavender and black, one for Passover. My mother made (she laughs) us, from a dress she made us little three-quarter taffeta coats. They were grey and black stripes, and it is as clear to me as if it happened yesterday. And my mother had two sister and a brother. Two of the brothers accompanied us to the boat. My Uncle Moses, who is part invalid, he was sitting in the train with a little cushion back of his head and I remember that wan look on his face. Whereas my Uncle Nathan, who was younger than my mother, he was very exuberant and he tried to calm her, you know, on the train going to Hamburg from Roumania. He says, "Never mind, Amoli, never mind. When you come to Hamburg they'll give you plenty of beer." A great comfort, I think. And my father's sisters lived in various cities in Roumania. They all couldn't come, but I remember my mother's two brothers coming to Hamburg with us. That I remember very clearly. And my aunt in Roumania, in Jassy, we used to call her Tanta Clara. Her name is on the passport which my grandfather took for Austria-Hungary. My Tanta Clara came with her mother. Her husband, Yakob Kopolovich, had the first store in Jassy that was comparable to our old

Park and Tilford stores. He sold exotic fruits and importations and he was a lovely uncle, and I remember he gave me my first orange. He was an uncle by marriage, but his wife, my Tanta Clara and her daughter Melony, whom we called Mitzie, came to say goodbye, and she came in an open landau. That is a type of carriage that has a seat for the adults and a facing seat for a child, and my aunt was sitting with a parasol it was an open carriage and Mitzie, who is now in Israel, was sitting, she was just my age, and she was sitting opposite her mother, and they came to say goodbye and they bought us little mementos of some kind. I don't remember. I remember one of the baskets was stolen on the ship with a lot of possessions that I had. And the departure, of course, for a child, isn't as traumatic as for adults, but I still remember my mother crying leaving the courtyard of the place where we lived, and our close neighbors, the name was, they called them Rhinehart, I think somebody later said that they were some relatives of Max Rhinehart, but I don't know. Everybody always tried to attach something. And the name of the other neighbor was Margoshis. Now Margoshis family had a lot to do with publishing here in America. I think of Jewish periodicals, but I never remembered what branch or who or why, but they were very lovely and they were very sweet to me all the members of the family, giving me little gifts and giving my little brother gifts and so on. And talking about my little brother, I remember when he was born. (she laughs) That's another story which I won't go into because just to mention that his godparents at he time when he was circumcised, (shelaughs) his godparents spoke in German and the woman said to her husband, "Look Joseph,, Sholom Joseph," and I remember that clearly because my father had just come back from a trip, I don't know where, and he brought us these little chocolates wrapped in silver foil and tied with ribbons and we kept them under, my sister and I put them under the cradle, but these people who were godparents to my brother, subsequently migrated to Canada and they went to Saskatchewan, and when we were in New

York, when we lived in New York a few years, they came to visit.

NASH: What does "Shalom" mean?

LIEBERMAN: Shalom, look Joseph, Shalom. And this was just a digression, but I had to bring in the Greenburg family and how wonderful it was when they came. And Mr. Greenberg spoke about reciprocity when he came from Canada, and my sister and I tried, (she laughs) what was sure that he said presopcity and we were so sure up to this day she will say to me, "Do you remember when Mr. Greenberg (she laughs) came from Saskatchewan and said 'Presopcity?'" But this is just a digression. Well, we came to Hamburg and we had the beer, and we boarded the ship which was called "Graf Waldersee", (she translates) Baron Waldersee, "Graf Waldersee." And why we didn't take better accommodations, well, I suppose there was a lack of money with which we had to save. We came steerage, but we had a very nice compartment and what I remember in lying in my berth and I was sick for the duration. I still get very nauseous and vertigo. But one of my sisters, Edna, who was very beautiful, and she got about and she was healthy and strong. She got about all the ship and she got to know the captain and the mates and everyone and she used to come down periodically with the choicest, with the choicest wines. Most of the time they served you good food. The staples like potatoes and meat and herring and things like that, which I wouldn't touch. I didn't touch anything, nothing. I must have toppled off the boat when I came to Ellis Island, and little by little,

we managed and we came to Ellis Island. And there stood our trusty man, the brother of my grandfather's supervisor of his estate there. His name was Brownstein, Shopser Brownstein, and his brother had heard from Scockser that his boss's son was coming to America and there stood Lave Brownstain with a derby on and with his wife standing near him and she had a hat with ostrich feathers. And when he saw my father, I guess he must have known him years back, he tipped his hat to him sort of in awe, and it was very embarrassing. My mother always said she felt like going through the floor, but the floor was a stone floor, (she laughs) when she saw that. This man sort should of humiliate himself by tipping to his hat because his brother worked for my grandfather, but he was sweet man, he and his wife. And I don't know what we expected. But he had this, he had a driver I think, I don't remember, or whether he drove, this wagon, this four wheel with a horse, and we weren't, oh no, I'm talking about the second, he met us the second, the second day. The first day we came late in the afternoon and we had to stay overnight and he came the next morning. Ellis Island, they had provisions and these big beds that were as good as they could give us, but they had no mattresses. They were wire springs, but that was alright. You took some of your own things and it was so interesting to see all these people and it was a sight. And, of course, my mother I suppose mentally lifted (she laughs) her skirts to step over because she had never really done much. She was really a pampered (she laughs) frau. But anyway, she was a big sport and asked the next

day when Brownstein came to take us with all of our paraphernalia and was like Caesar's legions, and he took us to his place in Brooklyn, I think we had a lot of nerve to impose on this fine, good-hearted man and his lovely wife.

But they had everything in readiness for us. They had a flat, but most of it was occupied by beds, and everything was snow white and just lovely and fine food and all. And they kept us for days and we looked around and we finally found a flat on 40 Beaver Street in Brooklyn, 40 Beaver Street on the ground floor. And we moved in and I don't know how the furniture came in there, but I know there was a table and chairs and bedsteads and we had lots of our own things, but it always, through the graces of this fine Mr. Brownstein, and, of course, it was a paralyzing thing to be dumped. (she laughs) It was almost paralyzing. But my mother was a big sport, she was a big sport, and we were introduced to people living next door. There wasn't another Jewish family on the street. But these people were Germans, German families. They spoke German, my mother spoke German beautifully, and they saw that we were able to care for ourselves and we were nice and clean and neat and everybody was very good to us. And I don't know what happened. I know I didn't go to school that first term because it was November and I really don't know what happened, what we did is sort of hazy, how we got along. I remember us playing with the little girl next door to us, the janitor's little girl, her name was Stephanie. And Stephanie Gagle. I remember that, (she laughs) Stephanie Gagle used to laugh at the way I spoke, but that was

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alright. But we were there for almost a year and I eventually went to school and I had a teacher by the name of Miss Caufield and she was the one who taught us the song "See Where the Rising Sun," and it was something like that, (she sings), "See where the rising sun..." in my mind rising was synonymous with the word "rice." So in my mind's eyes I look back, I see rice falling. (she laughs) But she was a lovely, lovely person, Miss Caufield.

END SIDE ONE

BEGINNING SIDE TWO

LIEBERMAN: And my sister Elsie had a teacher whom she

insisted on calling Miss Papaya, but her name was Miss Maguire. And Elsie got (she chuckles) along very well. And I don't know what, somebody recommended my father to a man by the name Abramowitz who was Roumanian and he had a factory in the Ridley Building on Grand Street corner Orchard, and they needed a bookkeeper, and my father used to do a lot of it for my grandfather, and he used the single-entry system and Mr. Abramowitz who had known of my father antecedents, I think was happy to have him come and he gave a nice salary, which was unusual for those days, and my father would go from Beaver Street where we lived to Grand Street until it became quite a burden and we moved to Grand Street, and what a revelation because living where we lived in Beaver Street near Flushing Avenue, near a store called Batterman's. That was the only department store,

and that first Christmas at Batterman's the management had a party, a street party, and Santa Claus, a few stories up, threw toys down to the children, and my brother was with me and he caught a little cabinet. I think it was a little spice cabinet, and I used to use that when I played house as a sideboard. And near us was a dairy farm. Not a farm, but it was sort of a place with stalls where they had some cows, and you went and bought fresh milk at five cents a quart, and I think it was one of the first depots of the Strausses, of Nathan Strauss, the philanthropist who had given milk to the city, you know. They had these milk stations and somebody said that, whether it was true or not, but that was one of the first depots of the Strauss Milk Centers. And life during the first year was sad. My mother had to learn how to use a washboard and she began to cook for the family and which, as I said, she was a great sport and everything was fine. We got along very nicely. In the meantime, my oldest brother, who was left behind, Adolph, he was left behind to finish his studies, decided he wanted to join us and he came about a year after that. It was about 1900. And I have a little memento of his speaking about it and he, I remember he took us, he took my sister Elsie and me to see a Punch and Judy show. Somebody gave, I don't know where or what because the last memory of him that I had was in Roumania when he sat on my father's sort of a little study and there was an open fire, Adolph was home on vacation and he was telling us stories and he was toasting a pumpkin on a stick in front of a fire, and I still, in my nostrils, I can scent that aroma of that

toasting pumpkin. And he certainly made up plenty of stories that he told us, and when he came to America he was full of stories. But talking about that study, of course, this is going back and forth, I remember there was a cartoon hanging above the fireplace and it depicted a phase of the Dryfus case. There was a man with a whip depicting, I guess, the authority, the military authority of France and a subjugated soldier, the pride I guess of his paraphernalia and his buttons and his epaulets. He was being whipped. That never happened, but that was in the cartoon and Poppa came in, my father came in, and I said to him one day, "What is that? Why are they hitting this man?" Of course, my father couldn't go into detail of the Dryfus case, and he said, "He probably didn't want to eat."

(they laugh) Yes, he probably didn't want to eat and that was the punishment he got." Now we are moved to Grand Street. And what a difference. Lively, people who spoke various languages and lots of Yiddish. I knew very little Yiddish then. I could understand German. And the girl who, two girls came to greet me. One was Josephine Wisehart, the daughter of our janitor, and the other one was Freida Bonime. Freida Bonime is the sister of Joseph Bonime who was accompanist to Misha Elman (she laughs), the violinist. They lived a floor below us and they, and Josephine Wisehart, who was a German Christian, she spoke Yiddish so fluently and spoke to Freida and they were talking about me in Yiddish. That was the funniest thing.

Well, I made up my mind that I was going to learn, and I did. So now I can speak Yiddish in any dialect. Yiddish

of Roumanians, Yiddish of Russians, Yiddish of Austrians. And, but it was wonderful. And all of our neighbors were people of quality. They were people who were, and when I say quality I mean they were ambitious and all their children went to school and later on they became professionals or they went into fine businesses, and it was a lovely, lovely place and we had a next door neighbor, the Goodermans, And they had been Roumanians and that was, of course, for my mother a wonderful thing. Of course, there were these ethnic difference amongst the Jews because the Roumanian Jew looked down on the Russians, the Austrians were neither here nor there, the Austrian Jews. The Germans looked down on all of them, and it was really a scramble for recognition. But it was very pleasant and we had a wonderful time. And then I went to Public School 137 and we had very fine teachers. There wasn't one Jewish teacher in the group, but they were the most sympathetic group of teachers, of people, that I have known. All the people who were associated with the immigrants, I must give thanks and credit. They were dedicated people, dedicated people. They may not have been a siege of masters and Ph.D degrees. These teachers went to a training school or some of them were even political appointees, but they were dedicated people and I can still remember the names of the people (she laughs) that I had as teachers. I had Miss Hosmer, I had Winifred A. Reynolds, I had Frederica Burk, I had Miss Scraub, who was married when we were in the fourth year and we gave her a wedding present, and her friend Miss Clark, bought the present in Gorhams from the money that we

collected because she didn't trust us (she laughs) to buy something that would be right. But Miss Clark did that for us and I still remember the flannel bag in which this tomato server came and how we all put our heads on our desks and cried when Miss Scraub left. And we got Miss Kilpatrick as our teacher and Miss Kilpatrick, Isabelle Kilpatrick was beautiful and lovely and she loved us all and she would go to the theatre and she would come back and sing for us, and that was the time when the musical "Babes in Toyland" came on, And I still remember the songs from that that she taught us. "Put down six and carry two," and "If a steamship sails two thousand miles", and only the other day I read in the New York Times how the profession of a tinker, you know, a tinker who lines copper vessels, how that profession is out because most of the time, gypsies used to do that, (she laughs) and, of course, I read in the Times that there was one place, I don't remember where, just a few days ago where this man relines these vessels that lots of restaurants use because heat is distributed evenly in copper vessels, and I thought about the tinker and what came to me last night (she laughs), and this is, as they say, the God's honest truth, came to me last night, was the song, "The Tinker's Chorus", which Miss Kilpatrick had taught us. And I recited to myself in bed that entire verse and the chorus was, "tink tank, tink, tank, tink tank, tinka tanka, hear our hammers ring. When the day is brisk we frolic and we frisk as proud and as able as a king." And that was what Miss Kilpatrick had taught us. Then we went to Miss Green and that was the

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fifth year. After the fifth year, PS 137 thought that it gave us enough education, they could not add on any more classrooms because the building wouldn't permit it and there was this lovely new building erected on Hester Street between Essex and Ludlow, Public School 62. It had a department for elementary classes and then it had the first department that was a precursor of the junior high schools, that's the seventh and eighth years. And I first went to the lower department, sixth year, I finished the fifth and entered the sixth. Now in the sixth class there was Miss Lincowski the first half year and Miss Tuttle the second half year. Then we went upstairs to the departmental school, seventh and eighth year, from which I graduated, and it was there that I had the good fortune to be recommended for the editorial staff of the school paper. My eighth year teacher, Miss Anna Recardle, may she rest in peace, sent me to the head, to the teacher in charge of the school paper, and it was my husband. Now this is a strange thing for me to say, but only--well, he repeated that years ago, he said when I walked into his classroom, he knew he was going to marry me. Alright, and he did. Now I won't go ahead with my life but I will begin his.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING SIDE ONE, SIDE ONE

LIEBERMAN: This is Mrs. Elias Lieberman, the widow of Elias Lieberman, who was once called "America's perfect immigrant." The person who made this

remark was Raymond Vale Ingersol and I was seated on the platform listening to him when he was the principle speaker at the commencement exercises of the Thomas Jefferson High School of which my husband was first principal. Now Mr. Ingersol had known my husband for many years, from the time he was a young boy at the University Settlement, and he knew his ambitions and his enthusiasms. I will digress a bit because I have before me an examination paper given by the Social Studies Department at the Westport, Connecticut High School. My granddaughter, Meg Lieberman, is a student at that high school and one of the questions on this examination in social studies was about immigration and the American way of life. My son, knowing about this assignment, said to his daughter, "Meg, don't you think you ought to take grandpa's poem with you to school because it touches on Americanization." And the poem was, "I am an American," which is very well-known, and I think that almost every child of a certain age had to memorize it at sometime in his life, but it was inspired and came to my husband in one sitting when he wrote it. It just came to him. He didn't have to work over it at all because I remember very well, we had been married just a few years and I was in my little workroom and he was working in his and he came out with this poem and he read it to me and he was really trembling because it was something that meant so much to him. And now at this high school which Meg attends, this poem was part of an examination paper and her social studies teacher said, "Read the following poem, 'I am an American,' by Elias Lieberman, whose granddaughter Meg is in Mr. Poppy's American Studies class." And one of the first questions relating to this poem was, "This American's ancestors probably came originally from," and there was a blank, and so on and so on. Now this American I have known for many years and I have his story from himself, from my own observations, having been married to him for 56 years before he died, from his mother who lived with us for a good many years, and from his own writings, and just because he was my husband. Now

this is the story of his life. He came to this country with his family in 1891. They also came via Germany. Now this is a long story. They came originally from St. Petersburg. Now you ask, "What privilege did a Jewish family entertain that they could live in St. Petersburg?" Well, the story goes way back. My mother-in-law's father, as a small child, was stolen and taken into the Czar's army. One had to serve almost twenty five years, and upon his release he was given the privilege for himself and his issue to be able to live in St. Petersburg. And that's how they lived in St. Petersburg.

Now other Jews were permitted there if you were an artisan of some kind, but nobody who was in business. If you were an artisan, if you were a tailor or shoemaker or tinker or something like that, you got permission for a certain length of time, but people in business were always spied upon, and my mother-in-law, who was in business with my father-in-law, were at the mercy of the police who would come in for their daily or weekly or monthly rakeoff and it became very difficult, it became very difficult. And my mother-in-law, who was unusually courageous, made up her mind that they would come to America where she knows that her children would have a freedom. Now at that time my husband was eight years old and he had been tutored privately and he had also gone to a Jewish religious school, and he was very well-versed in the Talmud, etc. And he knew his Russian from tutors and he had a younger brother four and a half years younger and an older brother. The older brother lived with another relative, not in St. Petersburg, and was going to some professional, to a school of higher education, and he would follow as soon as his parents were settled here. So they were packing, the same packing that my family knew of, and taking these farewells, which were always a final farewell. It, one of the most traumatic situation that I can think of, to say goodbye to your parents, to your sisters and brothers, and come to a strange land. Well, they had lots of, they call it (?), Julius Caesar and his army had it, and they took with them everything that they could take. In their

possessions, in their trunks, there were my mother-in-law's lovely dresses, her scarfs and laces, and lovely pieces of brass. I'm just looking now and showing a young lady the pair of candlesticks that they brought from St. Petersburg. And lots of the St. Petersburg art was imported, and these candlesticks don't look as though they were made in Russia. They have a French influence because I saw something like it once in a French exhibit. And she brought three pairs of candlesticks. One belonged to my brother-in-law's family and one to her oldest son's family. And lovely pieces of silver, sugar bowls, no samovar, no samovar because it was too a big of thing to take, but odds and ends of very fine delicate pieces, plus bedding, of course, all pillows and featherbeds and comforters and, oh, I don't know, odds and ends that they thought they might need here. And their experience was that they knew nobody here with the exception of a distant relative who said he might meet them. And when they came to Ellis Island, there was nobody there, so some sort of entrepreneur got hold of them and it was just before the Day of Atonement and he said, "He'll take them to a Jewish hotel." And he did, but they were really incarcerated there because they were, they were really held up and lots of their money was taken, their trunks were opened, and it was just by the grace of good fortune that somebody found out and traced the person who was to meet them. Finally he came and took them, and took them to a flat, and there on Orchard Street, and there's where their life began. And my husband immediately, as he says, knew that he loved the English language. (she laughs) And he said, he made it his business to listen carefully and to try to learn, and he did, and he became one of the most proficient scholars of English in appreciation for English, the language, its literature, its background, altogether. And from the time he was little to the time of his death he used the English language to express himself, and I don't know where to tell of the boyhood or of his young manhood, but I'll begin with his boyhood because there was such a great influence in his life.

He belonged to the University Settlement and he adored all the people connected with it. At that time the settlements were visited by volunteers, people in higher walks of life who were dedicated to the immigrant, and he made friends with all of these people and they were friends until the end of his days. One woman, who was a young girl at the time, she was the daughter of Dr. Buck, who was the Chief of Staff at one of the hospitals, the Vanderbilt Hospital, in New York. Miss Winifred Buck, at the age of nineteen, came down to the university settlement to take care of these little boys, these little immigrant boys, teach them a way of life, and the American way of life, and to guide them. She was very young and it was quite something for her to come down. She had to bribe, I know my husband told me that she used to not bribe, but give somebody fivecents to escort her. But she came there and she taught them various things and when afterwards they grew up to be twelve, adolescence, she handed them over to another director, and one of the other directors was this Mr. Ingersol, who came to deliver the commencement address. And he was the one, knowing firsthand, that my husband was the perfect immigrant. When he was a very little boy, about the time of Miss Buck, he visited the library that was first conducted by the University Settlement. At that time the University Settlement was located on Delancy Street. It was just a private house. One of the lower floors had a room and there was a long table in the room and on it were books. That was the library. And my husband tells me that he'd go there practically every day and he would borrow a book and bring it back and take another. The librarian in charge was a Miss Reynolds. No, Miss Renard, and he was confused because he saw one book called "Renard the Fox," and he said he tried to (she laughs) evaluate her position there. How could a Renard the Fox be a fox and a librarian. (she laughs) And he attended the University Settlement. There is where he learned the arts of, I was going to say self-defense, (she laughs) the various arts including the art of dancing. And he went to a dancing

class and he wanted to learn things because he knew that American boys danced and he wanted to dance. And the people in charge were very, very patient, and all of these people later became his friends. And he attended, oh yes, he went to elementary school, Public School 20. He wasn't very happy because, there, because he didn't feel that he was getting the inspiration, the enthusiasm from some of his teachers. Some he loved, some he didn't. And he was very anxious to get out of that class and try to get out of the school. At that point in time, New York City was organizing its first high schools and the Boys High School of Manhattan was organized. And it was on 13th Street. Later on the Boys High School of Manhattan became the Dewitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, and my husband took the examination and passed it and he was able to bypass this graduating class in his elementary school and enter the Boys High School of Manhattan. He was the first class and I am proud to say he was graduated as its first honor student and his name leads all the students on the honor plaque in the Dewitt Clinton High School. It reads, "Elias Lieberman, 00, 1900," and he was the first. Then he took the examination and entered the sophomore year at the College of the City of New York and there was no more loyal City College man and alumnist than Elias Lieberman. He wrote the alma mater song, "Lavender, My Lavender," and he absolutely was devoted to the college until the very end. I am just trying to think of more, the incidents in his life. Yes, this Miss Buck, who was that nineteen year old lovely person who came down to take care of these little boys and who said to Elias, "Elias, the word is `burst', not `busted,'" (she laughs) and she married, now why should this escape me because I know is as well as I know his name, one of the editor of the Outlook Magazine, and the editors of the Outlook Magazine had accepted quite a number of articles from my husband on recommendation from his wife, and when Miss Buck, Mrs. Abbott the name was, her father-in-law was the Reverend Abbott, of the famous name. It will come back to me. When she died, it had

been in the papers that the only member of the University Settlement Boys Club whom she wants at the funeral, if he's still alive is Elias Lieberman. And I went there with him Cornwall on the Hudson, and she had, as in her will, the entire living room was just banked, she wasn't there because eventually she was cremated, but the entire room was banked with chrysanthemums and the man who read the eulogy, a minister, read from certain marked passages in the Bible, also marked poems, and I said to Mrs. Abbotts' brother at the time, "How is it this minister is so knowledgeable and he knows so much about poetry?" Well, he says, "Winifred had them all marked out before she died." And all these people who were ever associated with my husband were very loyal, all the time, and we had so many very good friends up to the very end of his life. I shan't go into the details of his educational career because that's a very special topic. I might begin just that he was a dedicated teacher and I have a little photograph, a little snapshot of his first classroom and it shows him seated at his desk, back of him the blackboard, and above the blackboard a railing on which there is a bust of Dante which I have now in my living room. It is a plaster bust, a green bust of Dante, and I always kept either a laurel or an ivy or some kind of wreath on his head for the sake of poetry, and there was a bust of Shakespeare on this rail and was a bust of Heine, the German poet, and he had two flags at the end of the blackboard and they said, "Excelsior," and he was a young teacher at the time because he began to teach when he was about twenty five. And with his first monies he bought these things, and he was a dedicated teacher, as I ought to know, having had the luck to have met him when he was a young teacher and to have become engaged to him (she laughs) and to have married him, to have a family and grandchildren. Now I am sorry that he hasn't lived long enough to see his great grandchildren, one of whom looks just like him and whom I can realize I love very dearly. (she laughs) Not that I don't love them at all, but this especial, and his one grandson

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who has the temperament of his grandfather, the delicacy, the looks and everything. And I have two children. We have two children. Amy, who was just up until recently was assistant professor at the College of St. Elizabeth, teacher of English Compostitional Literature, and my son James, that's James Lieberman, who retired a few years ago from the United States Public Service. He was head of the Audio-Visual facility in Atlanta, Georgia, and he was retired as Assistant Surgeon General and Rear Admiral. They're two lovely children, (she laughs) and very, very dedicated to the memory of their father because every time I see them or so, they always say, "Well, Daddy used to say this," or, "Daddy that," and it was really a true affection and respect between a father and his children and a husband and his wife. At some other time when I, well, I am not so emotionally (she laughs) touched, I'll be able to give more of the life of Elias Lieberman, which deserves the greatest scrutiny and it does hinge on that wonderful compliment that "he was the perfect immigrant."

END OF INTERVIEW