

NPS-26/VERA KAPLAN

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VERA KAPLAN

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RUSSIA, 1923

AGE 23

PASSAGE ON A HAMBURG-AMERICA LINE SHIP, EXACT NAME NOT RECALLED

NASH: Today is October 23, 1973. It is fifty years since Vera Kaplan came to the United States from Kiev. She came in 1923 and she is going to tell us the story of her experiences, how she left Kiev, how she made the best out of life. She said she always made the best and we are going to find out the worst and the best. Well, Mrs. Kaplan, it is a big story, let's begin.

KAPLAN: It was the day when we decided to leave the country, Kiev, Ukraine, well the circumstances were so that we were all starved. The circumstances were unusual because we went through all the revolutions and invasions, twice invasions by the Germans, and then after other people like Poland invaded us. So we decided while we had the brother in the United States, we decided we will go as try because

might as well either die in your own country or if we survived then we will survive in the United States where we really wanted to see our brother and circumstances were dictating to go.

NASH: I would like to know a little bit about what life in Kiev was like before you left.

KAPLAN: Well, 1914 when the war started, the Germans started to invade Russia and we were in Kiev so we were not too far from the battle line, from the war line we will say. And natural the army was going back and forth and the wounded and we had big hospitals in Kiev to accommodate the wounded and everything. And then it was a losing proposition for Russia because she wasn't ready for the war and everybody and all the population tried their best to help to win the war, but it was very difficult. Then by 1917 the government was compelled to resign, it means the Russian side resigned and gave the privilege to other group of people to manage Russia. At the same time our inundated representative of the Communist Party were in Switzerland and they were allowed to come to Russia, return to Russia, so it was about six, seven, people who returned to Russia. When they saw the situation in St. Petersburg at that time. St. Petersburg was under the name St. Petersburg, the old Russian name, they saw that it was a losing proposition so they decided somehow to manage to save a little bit of Russia from the Germans. Of course, the Germans had just the intention to conquer

Russia because Russia was big enough room for everybody and so they were very hostile. So the new government that took over had the power of recruiting more young people and older people to the army, so the army started to fight with Germans and they were able to push them back beyond the battle line and the Russian New Army, as we called the Communists, because it was in February of 1917 when the government turned over to the Communists, and they started to march through the entire Russia and to conquer, the spirit of Communism should be all over. You know how it is. It was, we were in a turmoil anyhow. So everybody was thinking that will be maybe better government for the entire Russia. And then when they came to Kiev the Ukraine's government said, well if it is a freedom, so might as well be leave. Ukraines should rule Ukraine. Ukraine was already, it was a big state and very, you know, it had a lot of food at that time. Still while the war was on, we still had food, supplies, because Ukraine was a very rich farming country. Well, when the Communists came and they saw so much food, naturally the rest of the Russia was very poorly supplied so they started to confiscate food and ship it to different spots of Russia like Moscow, northern part of Russia that was suffering already from lack of food. Well, it was already time that they took out so much and the peasants did not have seeds to replace for the next and so a natural, it was getting less and less food, supplies didn't come in from nowheres, not from the farm, and so the population started to feel the shortness of food. And then it was so bad that people were really starved from lack of food. And that was really the main part that they were so much antagonistic against the

Communists because without them they were able to plant and have food and have supplies, so the people were even half content, but they were content.

So gradually everything was getting worse and worse and we were getting, every time the army, the Ukraine Army, was pushing out the White, the Red Army. Naturally it was a fight. And so every, every part of Russia and Ukraine had different, well organized army like the Ukrainish Democrats and then the Ukrainish Communists, and then about six, seven of this were fighting. Every time the White, the Red Army came in they were fighting. The fight was naturally right in Kiev with arms heavy and the population was knocked out. Many of them were killed. So it came already, we had all very good positions in the government position.

NASH: What positions were those?

KAPLAN: We were all educated in our universities so like my brother was an accountant and I was working in the Justice Department.

NASH: What did you do in the Justice Department?

KAPLAN: Well, circumstances were so different and every time different country, different government came in everybody had different ideas so we were detailing the law, the books of law. So I was working on that, interpreting, because some did not, were against certain

laws that were created maybe a hundred or two hundred years ago. They were out-lived and the new law like if we had the Communist government came in, even if they were a short time, but they want it in their own way. So previous jobs, I had always very fine positions there.

NASH: How did it happen that you were allowed to live in Kiev? Wasn't there some special thing you had to do if you were Jewish to live in Kiev?

KAPLAN: No, see we lived in Kiev for many years before the war started and my father was able to, well, he was a successful man. He was able to pay every year the taxes, about a thousand rubles.

NASH: The Jews had to pay a thousand.

KAPLAN: To have the privilege to live there. And while we were a big family so we had the privilege to go to the high school and pay very little tuition. And so while we were working and the family was ten people, eight children and two parents, so it was very hard for us to just to manage to eat. Not only to eat, you couldn't even, we were in such a bad situation that even water we couldn't get. Beside the sickness cholera...cholera?

NASH: Oh, cholera.

KAPLAN: Cholera started to spread in our river so we were cut off from the water, supply of water from the river as wells we had. So they dug some wells and sent us special purified water, but that was cut off from the apartments. We lived in a big house, six-floor house, so the water couldn't come so we were compelled to come and the water supply came only from about two o'clock in the morning until six, so we were compelled to go out to get this little bit of water to have a drink or to rinse our mouth, not speaking about washing ourselves. That was impossible. So things and the situation was getting worse, from bad to worse, and we decided to leave Russia and try to go to our brother in the United States. My parents were very much against. They wanted we should go, but they hated to see us leaving the country and leaving them, natural. So one day we decided to go and we were able to take the train from Kiev, going down south, southern spot where Russia was closer to Roumania and that's where, well I would not speak about how we went because it is a lot to say, you know, to describe too much. So we decided, and we landed in the most southern spot of Bessarabia. It is also like a state, Kiev State and Bessarabia and Rurionias [PH]. Russia had about, I think about eighteen states. United States has fifty. At that time Russia was big. Each state was very big. So we decided and my brother joined me and we went together. So we came to the spot, there we found an old friend of ours, a young woman. She was a dentist and her husband was an engineer, so we found them there because they used to come to our house in Kiev, and we stayed there for a while and that was summertime, we stayed there for a while and tried to cross the border line at the river. Well, it

took about two months until we found that spot and...

NASH: You mean all this time you were hunting for the right spot to cross over?

KAPLAN: Yes, sure. We couldn't just cross. A certain spot, a certain time, with a lot of details that it is no used to talk right now. So we came to Bessarabia, and it was right there, it was under Roumanian government. It belonged to Russia but it was over around by Roumanians and everything was in Roumanian language and the population was Roumanian.

NASH: How did the Roumanians treat the Jews?

KAPLAN: Very nice. They didn't interfere too much. So we obtained papers as refugees and we found office that gave the refugees the papers and tried to help them to go places where they wanted like...

NASH: Is this the office of the Roumanian government?

KAPLAN: No. It was in Roumania, it was in Bessarabia, but the office belonged to the United States. It was the Joint Distribution Committee and they had the office there. So while we were there we didn't know when or what, we couldn't find even our brother right away because we lost the address of him. So I asked for position and my brother asked for

it and they offered us positions (?). I was a secretary there and my brother was an accountant there and so we thought it wouldn't take long. We started to ask how to go the United States. You have to have a visa, you have to have a passport, this, that and in the meantime we were working there. Took about two years to leave. Then we were assisted by some another committee to obtain, to find our brother in the United States.

NASH: What committee was that? Do you remember the name?

KAPLAN: Yes, HIAS, it was through the American Joint Distribution.

They were very nice to us. So we, when we found our brother they gave an advertisement in the newspaper and that newspaper was happened that read in Chicago by one of our relatives that we never met to this day, but he knew my brother.

NASH: What was the name of the newspaper?

KAPLAN: Something Jewish Newspaper. Maybe Day or something. It was printed in Chicago. And that cousin cut it out because it said my name, Vera, and my brother's name, Joseph, Duetchman, my maiden name, is looking for a brother named Paul Duetchman. And it happened that my brother was reading, somebody else was reading and told him about it and he got that newspaper and he read that we are in Bessarabia and that we are looking for

our brother and we haven't got the address. So he right away wrote to the newspaper his address and everything and he lived in Buffalo. And so that's how. So when we got the announcement, you can imagine how happy we were and we started to correspond with our brother and he said naturally you are coming to me. He was poor. He had a few dollars in a savings bank and he was a married man and had a child so he had to send us money because on the money that we made, we were making just to cover our expenses and that he had to pay for the passport and not for the visa. Visa was five dollars, but the main thing is to have the passports.

NASH: An American or Roumanian, which...

KAPLAN: Roumanian passports that allow to come to the United States under the, you know, the certain amount of people. How do you...

NASH: Quota?

KAPLAN: Quota. So it took over two years until we got the papers and everyone, and at the same time we were working and we were content. You know, you make the...

NASH: Why didn't you stay in Roumania? Did you ever think of it?

KAPLAN: Yes, they thought that we should stay, but we were so anxious to go the United States and see our brother and see the United States because we studied so much and we learned so much and we really were anxious to see the country. So we got the papers and finally the passports came. So we went to Bucharest in Roumania, that it the capitol of the Roumania, to get the visa from America. When we came, so those passports of our immigrants, the group that was there, were annulled by United States from Washington. Why, they found that there wasn't good passports, that we weren't really Roumanians, we were Russian refugees and that time there was different rules that we could. So the passports were annulled and we remained there. What to do? We decided we will go back to Kishinev where we were working and explain what happened and see. We returned and then a few days later I read in the newspaper that in Bucharest they have a representative of Russian, the old Russian representative, not the Communist, and his address. So we wrote a letter that if we could come and explain our matter and maybe he could assist us in going to the United States. He answered really nice we should come so we took again the train and we came there in the morning and he was really delighted to see us. That I have to say. He was so nice and kind and he heard our experiences, poor experiences, bad experiences and he said, "Well, I'll send a telegram to Washington." See, my brother, he was a veteran in this country, the oldest brother in Buffalo, so he had the right to bring us. So he sent, he sent, you know, an application in Washington in the right department that he wants to bring us there. By the time he got the papers, we got the

passports that were annulled. He thought we were coming on this passport, but they were annulled. We were just left without, without any way of coming. So when I saw, read that the Russian representative was here, so I came and, so he was very nice and kind. He says, "While you are here, I'll send a telegram to Washington and see what I can do for you." He says, "You know, I may get the answer four o'clock, five o'clock in the afternoon." He says, "Would you like to come to me next day in the morning to hear the answer?" Naturally we went. We stopped at some kind of a little hotel and then the very next morning we came and he said that he got the telegram and he showed us the telegram that we were allowed to come to the United States on our Russian papers. Can you imagine? We had with our, the diplomas, some Russian (?) details, papers. So we were very happy and while we had very little luggage with us, we decided we'll go. But we didn't have too much money. We had to have at least sixteen dollars to cover our expense. Where did we have to go? Beside American visa, you have to have transit visa. Like if you go through Poland you have to have Polish visa and Austrian, but we had to go to Hamburg there because my brother wrote that he send two tickets for us in Hamburg, so we have to take the boat in Hamburg. So, but to have the money it was very difficult for us. So I went HIAS, but they refused to give us money. They say no we don't supply money, that is your own business. No, no. I say we have to have the transit visas and they says it's up to you how to go. So we decided if Poland didn't want to give us visa because my brother was a man and they were, they said he should go in the army and he was a lawyer in Russia so he didn't have to go. Well,

they didn't want to give us so we went to, to Austria, to Austrian Ambassador. He said alright. So we had to go through Hungary. Hungary okay also. They said alright you just, we'll detain you, you'll pass by or stay for a day or so. So we went through. From Bucharest we went to Hungary, to the Budapest, that is the city, and we went by train, and then we stopped in Austria. We went through all those, Austria and then Hamburg, German gave us the transit visas and so we were free from that trouble. Money we didn't have, but little money that we had in Roumanian we had to exchange in every country like Hungary and Austria and then Germany. So that was easy and we weren't worried that we are starved, we are hungry. That doesn't worry. You get so accustomed to circumstances. So it took us about, I'll say about two, three days until we crossed all Europe and came to Hamburg. When we came to Hamburg we went outside the train, big huge man came. I remember his, how it was a great coat and very nice polite and he came to approach my brother and me and we were standing with our suitcase outside and he said, greeted us very nice and we answered natural.

NASH: What language was he speaking?

KAPLAN: He spoke in German and we spoke very good German, very free, just like Russian. Well, we studied in our schools. So, and I asked him, what, and my brother was really worried. You know how it is. He is a man. It is different situation and a woman is different. I ask him what is the matter so he picks up the lapel; I remember right now I saw his button.

He was the detective, FBI, and he say, "You don't have to worry. I just want to tell you that you have to go in foreign house to be inoculated and washed and wait for, do you have your passports." I say, "We have our papers. My brother wrote that in Hamburg we will have to board the boat which will take us to the United States." He say all right. Then he say, "You don't have to worry. Nobody will arrest you. You go just to that foreign house and you'll wait till all the papers will be filled out for you and in order." So he told us and brought us to where the railroad was going and introduced us to young man who under whose supervision we were going. We couldn't go all alone. And he took us to that foreign home. It wasn't a home. It was a big village, excuse me, with all the foreigners had come from all over the world. And each they gave you a room and food and baths and everything.

NASH: Were all these people waiting to go to America?

KAPLAN: Pardon?

NASH: Were all these people waiting to go to America?

KAPLAN: No, not all. In fact, we didn't meet anybody who was going that day to the United States.

NASH: Were they waiting to go to other places or they were just

living there?

KAPLAN: No, this particular house was for the foreigners who were going via United States. Then they had different houses that were going to South America and the other countries and then they had special house where not everybody could go through like that. See, they gave you physical examination and if you did not fit or your papers weren't right or physically you weren't fit and mentally, then they detained them in those houses. They like hospitals were. We liked very much there. It was beautiful. They treated us so nice. Natural took time till we got all the papers. We were there about three or four months. Yeah, and we volunteered to work for the office there. In fact, they wanted, were anxious we should remain also in Germany, but we said no, we want to go to United State and our brother had sent us papers and tickets and everything. We just wait for them. So both of us, we volunteered and we worked in the office there and then after three o'clock (?). Certain days we didn't even work so we went to Hamburg to see the city. It was beautiful, clean, spotless and very interesting and very nice people were there in the office. Everything was in German language, naturally. Then it came time, date, when all the papers were right and the tickets for the boat arrived, everything, and they told us that a certain day like three or four days later the boat, Hamburg-American Line will start, will have to board and go. In the meantime we were in that place and it was, I remember the day when New Year came and we were there and all the doctors and nurses and about ten or twelve people

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came to our room and we celebrated the New Year's Day. The food was served. It was so nice and so friendly that you can't imagine. It was very nice. So then came the day when we are to go on the boat. Big ship came to Hamburg. Details, I wouldn't give you details, so we came there, again a board of doctors were sitting on the board and you would just pass by and they could tell you if you are fit to go and physically and mentally. They ask you a few questions. And then we went on the boat. We came in, they gave us a stateroom, very nice for two people. Then we have to put our name, what kitchen. We didn't know they have two kitchens so we put our name too.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

NASH: Why did they have two kitchens?

KAPLAN: Later we learned, we saw it says for meals put your name so my brother and I, we put our names and then we were already settled in our room and looked around the big boat and everything. So then comes a gentleman and he says, "I want to ask you if you are Jewish wouldn't you prefer to eat Jewish meal?" So we said to us it doesn't matter because we were so starved that no matter who give us something, we will eat, so he said, "I'll take off your two names. That was gentile." They say they give

you food very good, but then it's always ham morning and lunch. He said I'll give you different chickens and pot roast and, you know, Jewish. We said alright. And he was a very nice gentleman. He introduced himself as a, he was a Rabbi, but a reformed Rabbi, and that he cooks too. He was the cook and the Rabbi. You know how on a boat they always have a few positions. This was very nice so we were sitting and talking and it was about altogether over three hundred people on the boat. And I'll say about 50 people Jewish. But we didn't see them, some came in and out and I don't know, then finally boat started and we (?). We were very glad when the boat started. Then we said, well goodbye Europe. Here it was so, beyond that we said mentally good-bye to our parents and to the sisters and everything. We were upset. So then it was almost supper time and it was everything served. After we went out from that spot, Hamburg, that was the sea until we reached the ocean, it was the sea they called the Germans.

NASH: How old were you at this time?

KAPLAN: I was, I think I was twenty-three years old.

NASH: So you are seventy-three now?

KAPLAN: I am eighty now because you know, we were different, and yeah, because I got married I wasn't so young anymore. Ya. So until we reached the ocean it was nice and peaceful on the boat, you know,

comfortable. Then when we reached the ocean, the Atlantic, and we started to go nearer. See we did not stop in England but we came close to England, and that Island was like something unusual. I remember the impression of that Island. You couldn't see cities or something because we were far away.

NASH: What island? The British Isles?

KAPLAN: Yes. It was purple, big purple ball was here on the ocean. It was very interesting to see, to watch everything. So we passed by, we asked what it was, so that is Britain, very good, but we didn't stop there. That boat was going there at Hamburg and New York. That was the schedule. And the boat started to rock a little bit and we didn't care. It didn't bother us. So next morning we come to eat our breakfast and just a few people, maybe five people. So we asked the man, the Rabbi, where are they. They are all sick. The boat was rocking and they all got seasick and they are very down on the bottom. How do you feel? Fine. He gave us our breakfast, very good. He said, "Would you like to eat more?" I said, "Well, I think for dinner." "No, no," he said, "Don't be bashful."

NASH: I think you are the first person I have met in all the tapes that I have done who wasn't seasick.

KAPLAN: Both of us, we never were sick. Well, the boat, we were on that boat seventeen days. That boat was so rocking and so bad, it was a

big boat, and the situation was getting from bad to worse. And for dinner only my brother and I, we were in the dining room. The dining room was big, huge. The boat was this way and that way. He gave us soup and the big plate we had to hold in our hands to eat because it was shoveling to one side and another side. And so we were eating. Well, days and days and nights in such a condition. The ocean was just terrible. We were, instead of making our trip in seven days, we were seventeen days on the boat and all the time never stopped rocking. The boat was just simply terrible. The ocean was thirty feet high, the waves. Our captain was a very nice man, was a young man, so his captain rooms, two rooms he had way on top were out in the ocean. Who knows where, nobody. The whole boat had to be closed, all the stacks air and everything, just locked with special material covered because the waves were so high and they were knocking everything off the boat, and then not to fill in the boat more with water because through those old stacks the water was going down. And so we were in such a bad condition that usually in the morning we always looked at the boat and what directions we are going and how far are we from New York. So the first day we see the captain didn't mark anything, certainly not, so we were talking with my brother, must be something bad. We were five days in one place. Of course the boat was moving, but in the same spot. We couldn't come out from that very bad spot of the ocean, was so rough. And he did not make any annotations and then one of the stewards, they were all, some of them got so drunk, so one hour was a very nice man but he was so worried because the boat was sinking already and we were in such a bad, and took in so much

water and we were in the same spot. So he came and told us.

NASH: The boat was really sinking?

KAPLAN: Yes, and you know what happened? So he was so worried so the steward told us, we were sitting in the middle of the boat, they have the entertaining room, they play music, you can read books or do something. Very nice.

NASH: This was a German ship?

KAPLAN: Yes, it was Hamburg-American Line. So we were sitting there and we were eating. What did we eat? In Hamburg we had a few cents so we bought chocolate. Going on a trip, we bought big bars of chocolate, about six or eight. And we had lemon. They said we should get lemon and herring the boat will give us. And...

NASH: Why herring?

KAPLAN: Maybe it will nauseate us.

NASH: Some people that way have the wrong effect.

KAPLAN: And then we should buy some Schnapps. How do you call in

English? Not wine.

NASH: Liquor?

KAPLAN: Liquor. We bought a bottle in Hamburg also, bought a bottle I don't remember how much you paid, very little. The cheapest and the little. So we never opened it and we never ate, but we ate chocolate. So one time the captain came in to see how is everybody, this, that so he noticed that we were sitting, my brother was reading the English book and I was sitting and embroidering alongside him and listening. We were studying already English. When he saw the chocolate laying and how we were eating, so he got so upset, physical, he started to actually to vomit, so he rushed out...

NASH: He couldn't look at food? The captain?

KAPLAN: Yes, exactly the captain, and chocolate, it was terrible.

So he rushed into his room. He didn't have his rooms anymore, but he had some kind, and he was sick for three days there. He was so yellow just like the wall, like this color. And we were eating. We didn't know. We were eating. So one of our stewards that used to serve us so he came and whispered in our, to us that the boat is in very bad condition and we are sinking so we should go in

our room and pack our things. So we looked at him and we told him, he was German, and we told him in German why should we trouble ourselves to pack our things and suitcase if we are drowning, so might as well the fish should have it all. We took such a different attitude, you know, cheerful attitude...

NASH: You weren't worried that the boat was sinking? You weren't scared?

KAPLAN: We said, "Look, we went through such a hell in our own country that nothing else mattered." Yes, you go through certain period in your life that nothing matters, nothing matters anymore. Whatever situation you meet, you take it in a graceful way. So we said alright, so we will drown, so we drown. What can you do? It was already that five days we were in the same place. All of a sudden we feel the air changed. We couldn't go out anymore, but we were in the bathrooms and took our showers and everything, but to go outside you couldn't do because the whole boat was locked from the winds and from the water. The main thing because those waves never stopped. So we started to feel a little bit different air and the boat wasn't so bad, so I remember somebody came and told us from the sailors, that we are in a different spot now. The wind stopped, maybe we will be able to come out from that very bad spot.

NASH: What about that particular spot was so bad?

KAPLAN: Well, it was in a whirling wind and terrible fog that you couldn't see anything. See, our captain sent an SOS all the time, so some of the SOS reached New York and they send a battleship Washington to save us. That battleship never came near to us. Fifty miles away, they couldn't find us. Can you imagine a battleship couldn't find us. And it was terrible. The water was just bad for them too. So they were looking and looking, I don't know how long, I suppose a day or so. They couldn't find us, they returned back to New York and we remained there in that same bad spot. So when one of the sailors said, we say, "What is the matter? Are we already in New York?" We thought we will come to New York, the water will be good, you know. So he say, "No, we are far from New York, but the weather changed." We got the better wind and maybe we will come out from that stormy spot and fog, such a dense fog you couldn't see anything.

NASH: What kind of a boat was it?

KAPLAN: It was a big boat, Hamburg-American Line, yes it was a big boat, very nice boat. That boat

NASH: It was a regular steamship, right?

KAPLAN: Yes, sure. So for about eight, ten hours we were,

everybody started to breathe better. Those that were laying there in the bottom were still sick. They were very sick. Then we started to walk around, read this, that, talk, and then again after ten hours, again we went different wind started to blow and rocked the boat, but not so bad as before. So I remember I went way on top where it was closed, of course, was a library, so I lay down on the couch and I was reading a book. So one of the sailors came upstairs for some, you know, a reason I suppose to fix something. So he said, "How do you feel?" I said, "I feel fine." He said, "Because you are laying so comfortable and reading," he said, "It is terrible. Everybody is so sick." I said, "Well, it is their privilege to be sick." I said, "I feel fine." So we were talking this, this, and after that the boat was rocking because on top was terrible. The higher you go you feel. And my brother was occupied also, reading, studying, and I was studying all the time. But we ate all the time, no matter what. Even when we were, I told you we were eating chocolate while we were drowning.

NASH: Do you think that was because you had been starving before?

KAPLAN: I suppose something was condition, yes, physical, physiological. I suppose it was a change in the body because my brother the same. Never was sick, no. Then about, oh say a day before we approached New York again we were in the better condition and the ocean, and it was bad. So we saw some, we were watching the (?) the open door, but they

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started to paint the boat and we say, "How far are we," well we looked. The captain put on the boat the schedule where and what. Then it was one day, it was maybe twenty-four hours before...

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

KAPLAN: ...so we looked outside and got fresh air and we were so happy and music playing, some were dancing. I remember one very tall man, middle aged, about maybe forty, and he asked me to dance with him. On the deck we were already, so I said, alright, we dance, waltz, this that, very nice. And some from the bottom people start to feel better, the younger, they came upstairs too on the deck. And so we were eating and very nice. You know, you make friends there with all those that, that went, see that boat was going to the United States, no other place. So all those immigrants were not only immigrants were there, there were a few Americans that were coming home. They traveled somewhere else and were coming home. So we were all there. Then I remember my brother and I, we went on the deck and it was nice sunny and breeze, beautiful, and we were watching some fish were jumping out of the water in the ocean, and here the breeze came and we were in,

excuse me, in this spot and then my brother had the cap, so the cap flew off from his head right in the ocean. So he made like he wanted to jump so I was holding, I held him. I say, "It's alright, you didn't lose your head but your hat is (?)." So we had fun. He say, "you are right." Because it was just as easy to lose your head in the old country because through revolutions they were killing people, six, eight hundred people a day and night in Kiev.

It was terrible. So then about twenty-four hours later we started to approach already New York, not the city, but New York, nearer to New York and the water was nice and mild, not (?) but mild, comparison to what we went. And so we arrived to the harbor in New York at night. Was beautiful, those all electric lights and all. You see the New Jersey shore and our boat stopped. Why? Because we had to have escort boat which would take us to the spot where we have to get off. So it was night and nighttime those escort boats don't work. We have to wait to six o'clock in the morning. So we stayed, looked around, walked around this deck and about four or five O'clock in the morning we all got up. The whole boat, everybody came out after such a disaster that we went, came out on the boat and facing the shore, waiting for the boat, six o'clock, and here the sun shine, started to, and what do we see, the Statue of Liberty. Well, she was beautiful with the early morning lights.

Everybody was crying and the whole boat was, you know, bent toward that because everybody went out, all the maid, everybody was in the

same spot, and you know it was dangerous spot, sinking, and survive, and we all looked at the Statue of Liberty and she was beautiful with those sunshine on her, she was so bright, beautiful color that greenish like water and so big. And everybody was crying. The captain came into everybody, please we should move a little bit more to the center to the other side, and he say you will see everything. Nobody would move. Everybody. He was pleading. Finally we said alright. Then the little boat that escorted us to the port, where you have to go out, so came out and came to us and started to move the boat a little bit so we all started to move. The boat was passing the Statue of Liberty and here we see New York already with the big buildings and everything and we came to South Ferry. There was a house, then the boat stopped and all the Americans only were able to go out. The captain looked over the papers and everything and let them out. But we foreigners had to remain on the boat. And we remained and so it was about morning maybe or say ten o'clock and our boat moved further and that was when we were going to Ellis Island. Ellis Island already at that time was open just a year or two, as it was open.

NASH: It must have been opened longer than that. Ellis Island was opened in 1900.

KAPLAN: 1900, so it was more see. We didn't know. It looked so nice and clean. So when the boat came, not right into Ellis Island, they let us all out and there, of course, officers, you know the secretaries and everybody, the clerks, started to ask our names and put the papers in front of the commissioner. The commissioner had the big desk and we were there. So when it came to our, and we are already in Ellis Island. So we looked around the different building and people and this and that and then the commissioner, he was appointed that time, well the government, of course, appoints him.

NASH: Do you remember his name?

KAPLAN: That's what I want to, he was dear friend to LaGuardia, Fiorello LaGuardia. He was also of Italian origin. I remember his face. Sometimes I remind myself of his name because I remember, Italian name it was. Right now I can't recall. So he looked, our papers were open, and he looked them over and he greeted us very nice and he said, "Well you wouldn't have to stay here in Ellis Island. I see you are going to your brother to Buffalo and while your papers are in order and everything is alright," he said, "Only that you know the rules of the United States, that each of you have to have twenty-five dollars to show that you have, that is everybody has to show." I said, "Yes, that we know." He never asked us we should show. We didn't have see. We were changing, because shall I come back. When we were a day, twenty-four hours before we came to New York, so a man

came through, a young man came and asked if we want to send a telegram to Buffalo, to our brother in Buffalo, a cablegram, you know, a radiogram. So we asked him how much it would cost. Three dollars. And we had three dollars and twenty cents in our pockets so naturally we wouldn't separate from it and we say no it is not necessary. Why? We say it is alright. Our brother, he knows that you are coming. We said, we know, we were on the boat, here we didn't know if he will be alive or not. So we did not send the telegram. So when the commissioner, what is his name? I remember Ga started his last name. Maybe I will recall. So he did not ask that we should show and we didn't show because, we said, I told my brother in Russian, I said, "We'll tell the truth," because we haven't got the money. We have to have fifty dollars in cash. I say we will tell this man that we have three dollars and twenty cents and yes, we'll tell him if we have to sit, so remain at Ellis Island we will wait until our brother will send us. But while he did not ask, we didn't have to answer so he was so delighted with our papers and everything, our diplomas, he said, "I am sure that you both will succeed in this country," and he shook our hands and he say, "Such immigrants we greet and we are happy to admit them into the United States." It was very nice. So he said, you know, "I see that you are booked to Buffalo. You have to take the train to Buffalo." I said, "Alright." He said, "I'll put you in a little boat. That boat will bring you to the railroad, Lacavana Railroad.

NASH: Hoboken?

KAPLAN: Yes, I suppose it was Hoboken. We didn't know the one. So he told us and he called a young man to take us and so we went in that little boat that brought us to Hoboken, see. I didn't know, but we knew we had to come to, with that boat to the railroad, the railroad, this, that, so everything was arranged and we came and that was about, say, two o'clock, afternoon. The boat, the railroad had to stop two o'clock. So we said good-bye to the young boy and tickets, we had our ticket for the boat, covered the railroad too, see. So we had it with us and showed it to the man in charge.

NASH: How much did the whole thing cost, do you know, for one person?

KAPLAN: A hundred and fifty dollars.

NASH: For the boat and the train.

KAPLAN: Boat and train, yes.

NASH: From Germany to Buffalo. How much did that cost?

KAPLAN: Yes, from Hamburg to Buffalo, yes, a hundred and fifty. So we boarded, we went on the train already, sit down and we were waiting

until the train will start. Two o'clock the train started. It was very nice and it was a very slow train, natural. It was a local train, not an express, Lacavana. So around four o'clock the train stopped and we hear bells, just like Russian church bells, so we talk between ourselves. I say to my brother, "Sounds like Russian church." "Yes," he says, "like a church bell." I said, "That must be a church nearby." And so a few hours later again. We stop somewhere else and the bells ring and I say, "Funny they have so many churches in a free country." We thought the free country and nobody has a church. Maybe one or two, but not like that, and I say, "Alright." And so we were riding until about twelve, one o'clock in the morning and it stopped in the station and the bells are ringing and you say alright. We came to Utica Station, railroad station, Utica, and there we had to wait four hours for a special train. We had to change trains which would bring us right to Buffalo, four hours. So we were sitting in the waiting room and we said, "Well, we'll listen to the man who announces the towns," and, of course, to our Russian ears the towns were strange, you know, and he was saying, you know, like all the announcers they speak one after another, so I said to my brother, "You listen Buffalo and I will listen to Buffalo so maybe we will take the right train and finally we will learn some of us where we have to." So four o'clock in the morning we were sitting in that waiting room and it was a beautiful buffet there for sale fruit and sandwiches and a lot of things. Well, they had some kind of fruit that we never saw in Russia, big. It was grapefruit, but that size of grapefruit. I never saw another grapefruit size, and oranges, this, that.

NASH: What about bananas?

KAPLAN: And bananas. We never ate bananas. They were there too, bananas and grapefruits and oranges. Oranges, we had plenty in Russia, apples, this, that. And the sandwiches, but we didn't buy because we had only three dollars and twenty cents so I asked my brother, I say, "Are you hungry?" He said, "Who is hungry?" He say, "Are you?" "No," I say hungry.

NASH: And you were both starving.

KAPLAN: We were starved. So four o'clock he announce that a train to Buffalo is coming so we went out, went in that train and finally that train only took two hours to come to Buffalo. When we came out from the train we came in very nice station, clean, everything, and we hear taxi, taxi, taxi, taxi. I say, "What is it?" So my brother say taxi and he translated into Russian. I said to him, "Ask how much he wants. Show him the address where we are going and ask him." So he wanted three dollars so my brother came back. I wa standing there watching the luggage, and so he said three dollars. I said, "Forget about it. We'll have to..." He say, "How we," I say "We will see." So we spotted a streetcar, so I say, "Let's go

that streetcar and see what is what." So we asked the conductor and he saw we are foreigners and we show him where to go and he said, "Alright, I'll take you in my car, and then at certain spot I'll tell you where to get off and wait for another streetcar and that streetcar will bring you to that street with your brother." Very nice. So how much, twenty-five cents. That is very good. We got the ticket and the transfer he gave us and we're riding and when we came to certain spot he said, "Here you get off and wait on the corner. The other streetcar will come."

NASH: You could understand everything that he said?

KAPLAN: Yes. We understood very good. Well, see at home when we studied, we always studied besides Russian, German, French, and English was easy because I knew Latin very good because in our colleges we went through Latin too, my specialty. And my brother knew Latin and Greek too.

NASH: Is English that close to Latin?

KAPLAN: Pardon?

NASH: Is English so close to Latin?

KAPLAN: No, but the lettering, a, b, c, all in the same alphabet is Latin alphabet, m, n, o, p, everything, so we read excellent, but to understand. Certain words like "thought" or something, you know, a complicated English. So it was a little bit hard so we had our dictionaries so we looked over. So finally he brought us to certain street and he said we should walk about two, three blocks and we will find that number on the house, very good. That is how we came to Buffalo. So we walked and we came to, it was early morning, we landed about six o'clock in the morning in Buffalo, so it was maybe seven o'clock, so we came to my brother's house and we ring the bell and nobody answers. They had the porch so we knocked on the window. My sister-in-law heard the knocking so she got off from the bed and came to the window and pulled the curtain and she sees two people. So in English, she is an American, and she say, "Oh, that must be Joseph and Vera." So we smiled. She opened the door and we came in natural. She greeted us so nice with kisses and everything. "Where is my brother?" Oh, it was Sunday when we arrived and he was working in Bel Aire, big company and he was a very good mechanic and they liked him very much so they asked him if he could come in every Sunday from six till eight and watch, they didn't like, it was a very big factory with metals for the airplanes. So instead of closing the whole factory and the machinery to stop, they preferred from six till eight to wind again all the clocks, the machinery should work, not stopping, so they appointed him and they paid him very nice

so he said alright. He was an early riser anyhow. So she told us that he is coming home a little bit after eight o'clock, wasn't too far. So she explained to us in English and she tried to speak German and Jewish so we understood part, and then after eight o'clock the door opened and my brother came. When he saw us and when we saw him, don't ask. When he left Russia I was a young kid and I remember he was so handsome looking and he is the same Paul but old and a yellow face. He was here from 1906. He was in this country.

NASH: So how old was he when you saw him in Buffalo for the first time?

KAPLAN: Well, he left Russia?

NASH: No, when you came to see him in Buffalo.

KAPLAN: Well, he was a married man then. I'll tell you how old was he. Twenty-seven, close to thirty. He was then about twenty-seven, maybe twenty-eight.

NASH: But he looked so old. That is not very old.

KAPLAN: Well, you know, the skin changed and yes. Well, no, he was more because I was twenty-three when we arrived and he was about

eighteen, nineteen. We will say he was twenty years old when he left Russia so he was in his forty-seven, something like that. Yeah. So, well naturally we greeted him and my sister-in-law, she said the coffee and breakfast every morning, so we were sitting, tears fall (?), you know, how is, so then our brother asked, "How is it that you didn't let us know. Telegram from the boat?" And we told him that we were on that boat and what happened. He say, "Who had money?" We had three dollars, twenty cents, so now we spend it on our carfare so we have just, I say who could send you a telegram, beside we say we didn't even know when we will come because we were so long on the boat. He say, "Alright." He say, you know, he was reading the newspaper a few days before we arrived and in the newspaper and his wife was reading that the boat is drifting in the ocean and it is a terrible storm, fog, and how did we know, and that the boat, the military boat, what did I say before?

NASH: The battleship?

KAPLAN: The battleship came and couldn't find us and returned back. So my sister-in-law, so she says, "You know, Paul, maybe your sister and brother on there." Oh, he say, "Why should you say. They would send me a telegram or a letter to us that they are going with that boat." She say, "You never can tell." Sure enough we were on that boat. He couldn't believe it. He say, "Can't be, why should they be on that boat." He say, "You with your imagination." But she was right, we were on that boat.

Well, I say, "That was the boat." So we were sitting and talking and here she brought the baby. Baby was six months old at that time. Then is baby so I looked and this and that. For the baby I brought, once in Russia we had some kind of lottery and I won a silver spoon with golden, gold was inside, so I said to my sister-in-law that I have the this spoon, was saved, and I have it here. So she started to feeding with that spoon. She still has it, I think he has it. So we talked this, that, so we said to my brother we would like to go to see the city. "You will get lost." "No," I say, "Never lost." So he said first thing he went in the drugstore to get some kind of, he got that, how do you call it, magnesium, "How is your stomach?" Say, "Very good." We ate then and we felt good and we said we never were sick. He said, "But now you are here, you have to take it." We say, "Who wants it?" My brother didn't want it, I didn't want it. He came brought a bottle. Alright half a glass. He say you have to take it to clear up your system because here different air. On the boat you had different air, and in Europe different, you have to clean up. Alright, so I took half a glass and my brother. (?) spill whatever you want to. So we were sitting and then we had lunch, I remember. After lunch, so I said to my brother, you know what, Joseph and I and my brother, we will go on and take a little walk in the city, Buffalo, to see. He say, "You'll get lost." "No," I say. "You just tell the name of the street we know. How far is the main street?" So he told us about ten blocks. Alright. So we got dressed and my brother and I, we took a walk, straight walk to Main Street, and there on Main Street the stores were all closed because it was Sunday,

and we looked, beautiful stores, this, that, (?) big city (?), and then I spotted a man who was standing near one of the biggest department stores and he looked so peculiar, the skin and everything. He looked violet, brown violet, you know, that combination of color. And he was selling flowers, like wild. It was cold and winter. It was a bouquet of violets and he had a little basket and so I say to my brother, "Look he stays like a mummy." No motion. I say, "you know, he looks like an Indian." So my brother say, "You are right." That is the first Indian that I met. I remember him, I could paint him right now, yes. He was quite, 5'8", 5'10" maybe. Straight, elderly man he was. Well, elderly, who knows the age, but looks like a man in his fifties, and he looked at us while we were passing. We stopped and looked at him so he notices that we are looking at him and he looked at us and so I said to my brother, I say, "alright, let's pass." That is the experience that I will never forget. And so we walked a little bit further, further and then we took another street, and then we came home around four o'clock. My brother and my sister-in-law were worried. They said so long to--I say, "Yes, we walked," this, that, so we told them that we saw an Indian. See, Buffalo has Indian Reservation on the outskirts, and that's where they live, and he was standing and selling his flowers. So we talked, this, that. That was the first impression of Buffalo. Well, then towards evening my sister in law's parents came and her sisters. They also have a big family, about eight children. And so we got acquainted.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

BEGINNING SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

NASH: So you lived with your brother in the beginning? Is that right? Did you live with your brother?

KAPLAN: Yes.

NASH: Did he have a big house?

KAPLAN: Oh, big house? No, he rented. It was five rooms.

NASH: Did you and your brother each have your own room?

KAPLAN: Yes. One room was small like this kitchen and the other, yes, I think the young brother was in the living room sleeping and I was in the bedroom. Well, very interesting because about three, four days, next day I ask, that evening I asked my brother how to get a job. He said you just came, rest two, three months and then. I say "No," I say "rest two, three months." Because years ago immigrants came so they stayed home. I say no. So my brother say, "Oh, forget about." I say, "how do you get jobs here?" He say, "Look over the newspaper and you see." And my sister-in-law, I ask her too, so she said, "yes, that's how." I say, "Good." I say, "Well, you have the newspaper?" Yes. they had the Sunday newspaper, so they

looked over, I said, "Because I was very handy with everything, sewing, embroidering, a lot of things." So I said, well look over. Then two, three days later I took a walk in the morning all alone and I took a walk through the street and I see one store had embroidery in the window display. All kinds, sheets, pillow cases, a lot of things, cotton, so I was thinking what am I losing, I'll go ask. Many Germans lived in Buffalo, Polish and Germans. They had their, they lived there. So I was thinking, I saw about four or five steps to go up and a door. I went up and opened the door, the bell was ringing and already a woman came out what I would like so I said to here, if I want to buy something, and no I said, "I want to ask you. I see you have a beautiful embroidery and I embroider very good." She say, "Why, you looking for a job?" I say, "Yes." She understood. I spoke very good German. Now I hardly could speak. Well, I did very fluently and I could say whatever it is. So she understood me and she asked, "Alright, I'll call my husband." Came out, a very old man about seventy and she told him what I want. He said, "Alright." "Right now stay here, I'll give you something, you embroider and we will see." I said, "Alright." I sat down, took off my coat and I sit down and I start to embroider. 'Oh, so nice, beautiful," because I was very good in embroidery. So they said, "You want to come tomorrow to work?" I said, "Alright." How much will then give me?" I think six dollars. Six dollars, that is a, now sixty dollars make. So I said "Alright." And I think they gave me a dollar for the next work that I was sitting there and making. And I said good-bye and I took the address right away. Next day, early in the morning I got up, got dressed, and nine

o'clock I was there already. My sister-in-law said, "Vera, where are you going so early?" I didn't tell her my experience.

NASH: Why?

KAPLAN: Because they were very much against I should start to work already. You just came. So I, just rest a few weeks and so I saw that (?) I was thinking why should I upset them, so I said, "I'll go and see the town. Now it is the day the stores were open already early." I say, "I'm going to see (?) how these stores." I said, "Alright." "Vera, what time will you come home?" I say, "I suppose I will be home by twelve." I went and I went to that place and I working already twelve o'clock, so the woman in charge say, "I'll give you a sandwich, you eat with us." I said, Alright." So I had lunch with them. I say, "I want to go." It wasn't too far from my sister-in-law's house, brother's house. I say, "I would like to go to see my sister-in-law and I told her the address she had." She say it is not far, about six blocks. I was young to walk six blocks. In a few minutes I was home. So I told them that I went there in the morning and I have a job and I'm working and this and that. She say, "It is terrible." She was so, she say, "What should you do?" I

said, "Don't say anything. We came here not to fool around but to establish ourselves." My brother say, "Vera, where you work?" I say, "I went and I have a regular job. How about you?" He say, "I don't know what to do." With men it was much harder. He say, "I'll go and see and maybe in the harbor I will see something. There maybe they need." I say, "harbor is so far. It is right where the lake, Erie Lake." I say, "Go and register in school and register my name too for the evening." He said, "Alright, on the way I will do that." So he registered himself and me for the school. We went to evening schools right away. So when my brother came, so my sister-in-law told him already that I am working and so on and so on. He said, "It is terrible." I say, "Look, we always were occupied in the old country." and I say, "And in Europe too and why we came to the United States, such a wonderful country." I liked everything very much, yes. I was so impressed and my brother too. And so I was working there and then a few months later we looked over the newspaper and somebody wanted a person that knows how to calculate what heads.

NASH: How to what?

KAPLAN: Calculate heads. It means you have a head, how much material needs sew, how much cost is that. So I said to my sister-in-law, "I think I would like to go to have that experience." And she said alright so she told me where to go, how to do, and it wasn't too far for me because, you know, when you are young nothing is too far. So I came, very nice gentleman interviewed me and asked me because I was a very good statistician, so to me, whatever, I could measure out the (?) and tell you how much it would cost. So he liked the idea and he spoke very good German too. His name was, oh, I don't recall. Very much American name, it was. Littlefield, Mr. Littlefield. So he said if I wanted to work there he will give me fifteen dollars a week. Well, when I heard fifteen dollars, it is tremendous money. That time even men didn't make so much money. So I started to work there. Then my brother found a little job here that wasn't so easy for him and we sent to school. Then he said, "You know Vera, I think I'll go to New York." I said, "We have here in New York, we have cousins that never knew us. They remembered my father. My father was at that time very comfortable." And I said, "Alright, we'll write to them a letter." We looked over the telephone book and found their addresses, so he wrote one letter to one and he said that will be sufficient to find out. And he wrote who he is and that he came with me and who is our father, so we received a very nice letter with invitation to come. I say, "Now I am working here and making good money and I can give you the carfare to go to New York and you go yourself." So he went himself and he started with that cousin and he stayed there for a while and they gave him a job, you know,

the machine, Singer machines to be an agent. So it was a poor living, but he was making a living. About a few months later he wrote and, "You know what Vera, maybe you want to come so you will stay in New York and lead a more interesting life." You know, a different life. So I like the idea. I told my brother. He said, "Where are you going? New York is terrible, cold and so," I say, "Alright, I'll find a job there too, if I have here." So, I decided to go and that was August. And Buffalo was very nice and we had friends in Niagara Falls. I used to go there for a day or so for every two or three weeks, with my brother, with my sister-in-law, and with the baby. Then I came and I told Mr. Littlefield that I am going to New York. Oh, he say, he didn't want I should go. He say, "It is such a cold city. Nobody cares what you're doing and how will you get a job?" I say, "Well, job, I'll see." He gave me a wonderful letter of recommendation and I said to him the circumstances. I say, "My brother is there with whom I came and I really would like to live there. I'll come here." No, he say if you want, alright. You are through. So I packed, and it wasn't so easy, everything. I liked that little boy, started to walk, I trained him to walk already. And then so I decided that I will come to New York and will stay with my young brother. We took a room, one room. I remember first room, was one big room. And then we took two rooms for myself and for him. And he was still continuing doing the work with the Singer, but they didn't pay too much at that time. I say, "Well, you know, you ought to be a bookkeeper and bookkeeping is methods in every language is the same." So I say, "Look over the newspaper," and he could read that very good, English. So he looked

over and he found a position, very nice, in the diamonds, silver store. They were selling diamonds and silver and everything, as a bookkeeper and the man liked him very much and he had a daughter, single daughter, not too young, but, and she showed him how here you keep the books a little bit different so she shows him. To write, he was writing beautiful. I wrote also. In fact, the principal from the night school, he was amazed when he walked through the aisles and he saw how I was writing. He said, "You write beautiful English." I said, "I can read too." I said, "Only certain words I can't pronounce so good," and that is nothing (?). So I came and the wife of our cousin, she was an American, so I said, "Well, where is the Sunday newspaper?" We found on Fifth Avenue and 36th Street a man was looking for help, an assistant, you know, that same thing. So I said, Well, I'll go Monday, but my first impression of subway, I still remember. It is still in my head, yes. So she said, "Vera, you are not going to go alone to Fifth Avenue." I say, "I'll get lost," because the trains I didn't know where to get off, Canal Street, this, that. She said, "I'll go with you." and I said, alright. I was glad that she extended her hospitality so far. So Monday morning we went together and we came to Fifth Avenue and West 36th Street and she said, "You know what, Vera, I'll wait for you here outside." And I said alright. And I went. It was on the fifth floor, I came, he interviewed me, the man, and he liked very much. He spoke, oh, he say, "Where do you work?" I say, "I come from Buffalo." "Where do you work?" "Mr. Littlefield." "Littlefield, oh," the man where I was in New York was a wholesale man and he used to send hats to him in Buffalo, so he said, "He

is my customer, oh, one of the finest men." And he was a very fine man, Mr. Littlefield. So he said, "You know what? If you like to stay here?" I said, "Yes," and I showed him the letter of recommendation, wonderful, twenty-five dollars. Well, I didn't know--he said, "Are you satisfied?" I say, "Yes." Twenty-five dollars. So a week, so I said alright. And next day I should come nine o'clock and so he will show me the work and he will introduce me to his two, he had two designers, one French and one American, and to the designers and they will show you what, I said alright. So I went and said good-bye to him and went downstairs and I told my cousin. "Oh," she say, "Vera, it's wonderful, twenty-five dollars, wonderful, good." And what a nice man and everything. So we went in luncheonette to eat. That was my first luncheonette, restaurant in New York. So we had a very nice lunch and then we walked with her. She wanted to buy something in a big store. Then we came home, my brother came home, so I told him. "Wonderful, Vera, you are doing good in the United States." And then after that he started to look and he got that position and also they paid him much better. After that he was a lawyer. The cousin, the cousin's wife had the brother who was a lawyer and he knew how to make certain, if you buy property, you have to know where your property ends and starts, and it is like draftsman, so he showed him how to do it and he told him he should go to that bank and another bank and my brother went and got very nice position and they paid him very nice. He was a very presentable man and he had a very good head. So we established ourselves. But where did we live? We had, my cousin lives in Brooklyn so we took rooms in Brooklyn too, but to ride to New York

was a terrible, terrible thing. The trains were not like now. So we didn't have to walk in the train, the mob pushed you and pushed you out. And so things happen. So we stayed there for about a year or so in those rooms. Then I said, "You know, Joseph, let's look for rooms in New York. It will be easier to travel." My cousin said, "New York is terrible. When will we see you?" I said, "On some day and certain days off we'll come to you or you come to see us." So a lot of things I left out because too many. Then we moved to New York, 145th Street and Broadway, very nice. Two rooms, small, but very nice. And how we found them was really very interesting. Everything was interesting.

NASH: Well, we are coming to the end of the tape now. Is there anything you would like to sort of sum up? You got married, right?

KAPLAN: Yes. So one Sunday, I'll come to that, it was just three years after I landed here, my cousin, we used to come to them on a Sunday once in a while, called me up, I should come with my brother for a dinner on a Sunday. So I said, "Well, I happen to have two tickets, one ticket I had in the Metropolitan Opera for a night and say I would not like to miss because I never saw a Metropolitan Opera." Oh, he said, "So give it, sell it." I said, "To whom should I sell it? It is Sunday morning already?" So I say, "Well, I'll ask my brother if he wants to go." And from Metropolitan it was afternoon, and then after the performance he will come to Brooklyn and we will go home together. He said, that day he met a very old friend of

his. That is how I will tell you a few words about my husband. And he invited him, you see, Jack, his name was Jack, he say, "Come, we have some company from Europe so I will introduce you." So I didn't know. I came to them early, around twelve o'clock, and set the table for supper and everything and helped her with some food. And around five o'clock the bell is ringing and I said to my cousin, "Shall I go open the door or you want to?" He said, "I'll open the door." He knew he's coming. I didn't know. So he introduced me and that was the man whom I married.

NASH: Was it love at first sight?

KAPLAN: Yes, from his, mine and his. And then my brother came and went to New York. He took us to New York at night and went back. He lived in Brighton Beach. Well, we lived and then my husband, then we moved, while I was in New York, and he liked Brooklyn. He always lived all his life in Brooklyn, so we moved to that house, we lived forty-five years in that house. He was always with the piano. And we had two children, we brought them up and they graduated high school and colleges and everything.

NASH: Was he a pianist?

KAPLAN: Yes, he was a violinist and a piano player, yes. He was a

very fine violinist. He played beautiful. If you close your eyes you will think it was Yascha Heifitz, the famous, yes, played beautiful. And he used to give lessons and then he had the piano business. He was selling pianos. And so we lived forty-five years. My daughter graduated three colleges. She is a Ph.D. in biochemistry and she is, you know Doctor Salk, Jonas Salk, so that's what, so he met her at some kind of conference. It was symposium, and she gave a lecture in one of the biggest hotels in New York. He met her there. You see?

NASH: This card represents a contribution to the Salk Institute.

KAPLAN: Yes, Salk Institute, and that is with my husband and with her. And so he invited her to come and work there as his assistant and she was very good. She was a professor in Hunter College.

NASH: I hate to hurry things up, but it is the end of the tape. It has been really fascinating talking with you.

KAPLAN: Oh, I could tell you and tell you. Very nice. Well, I want to thank you, and of course, the United States Department of Interior to be so good and so generous to send...

END OF INTERVIEW