

NPS-37

LOUIS NASH (ISRAEL NOSCHKES)
BIRTH DATE: DECEMBER 13, 1881
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 92
INTERVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 1973 AND DECEMBER 14, 1973
RUNNING TIME: 47:02 AND 43:37
INTERVIEWER: MARGO NASH
RECORDING ENGINEER: UNKNOWN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: MANHATTAN
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: CHARLENE KEYLOR, 3/1979
and PETER HOM, 2/1995
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, 1900
AGE 19

SHIP: "THE ROTTERDAM"
PORT:
RESIDENCES:
? AUSTRIA: LEMBERG [LVOV]
? US: NEW YORK, NY

MARGO N: This is November 30, 1973. I'm visiting Mr. Louis Israel Nash who lives in Manhattan and came to the United States from Lemberg, Austria in the year 1900. Mr. Nash is going to be 92 on his next birthday and Mr. Nash is going to tell us the story of how he emigrated to the United States. Mr. Nash, tell us something about Lemberg.

L. NASH: Well, Lemberg was a city, a part of -- under the control of Austria. Every time there was a war of any kind, Lemberg had the most of it. Why, I don't know, but that's the history of it. It's a nice big city with a fairly normal population, not --- without any water connections. The only water we had was lakes. It was pools made-- there were no lakes. I was graduated, finished public school and went to work.

MARGO N: How big was your family?

L. NASH: How what?

MARGO N: How big was your family?

L. NASH: My family is my parents and three children. I was the oldest. My mother had lost five children before me. When I was 19 years of age, I had a job where I earned the most money of any boy my age. This store was the only kind --- the only one of its kind in the entire city. I had contact with the most elite people in the city.

MARGO N: What did you do?

L. NASH: I was hired to take care of sales, retail sales. But I also had to do the clerical work which the owner, who was a widow about forty

five or fifty years old, who had a partner, who lived with her partner, and she insisted that the - that work should do done in her home. Every time I went there and when I came back to the store, he found fault with me ---- criticizing me why I have to do --- go there to do the work. Why I couldn't do it in the store, and she was fighting that it must be done. That made me very uncomfortable. As a result, since I knew that I couldn't get any other work there where I could earn even half as much as I earned there, I decided that I must go to a bigger city.

At that time the best I thought of was Vienna or Berlin. My mother couldn't think of it because I was the oldest child. And finally two of my father's friends, tailors, were going to America. My father always spoke in favor of America because he said the people in America are so honest that even the jewelers leave their window displays ----- in that the stores had nothing else but glass doors to close and nothing happens. While in our city we had to have metal doors with two and three locks. These two men who were tailors who had sons here all ready doing very well agreed to take care of me and teach me the trade when I got here. That my mother was kind of favorable of.

And to make sure that in case anything goes wrong between those two men and myself, I also had an address of a couple who had no children that lived next door to us and they liked me very much. When they were going to America which was about two years before, they told my mother that anytime I should go to America myself, to be sure to go to them. They will take care of me. I also got thirty dollars of American money in preparation in case anything goes wrong. When we got here on January 1 199-1900 --- I think it was a Wednesday.

MARGO N: Let's go back a little bit. I would like to know a little bit more about your preparation for going and what the trip was like. What was the name of the boat, do you remember?

L. NASH: Well, there wasn't much ---- there wasn't much to the trip because my tickets were ready to go to Berlin and from Berlin to get on the boat which was the Rotterdam.

MARGO N: What class did you travel?

L. NASH: Third class, naturally. And if you want to know how we lived through it...

MARGO N: Yes.

L. NASH: On that trip I was the only person in the entire boat, first class and third class, that was not sick. I ate up almost everybody's food that we cu-that we brought with us. Outside of that, I have no special recollection of the trip.

MARGO N: Did you go to Ellis Island when you arrived?

L. NASH: Did I---

MARGO N Did you go to Ellis Island --- Ellis Island?

L. NASH: Yeah, I'm coming to it. When we got to Ellis Island, we were divided in accordance with the initials, with our names, initials. When my name was called, I was asked, "Who are you going to here?" I explained that I came with two men who were supposed to take care of me. They looked up the records and found that those two men were sent to Cleveland right from the Ellis Island. So I had this address of that couple...

MARGO N: In other words, those men had all ready left?

L. NASH: Yes. They were sent right from there. There were tickets for them and they went to Cleveland. So I had the address of the couple and I also told them that I had 30 dollars in American money in cash. They called over a man, turned over my luggage to him and sent me to that couple. When we got there, the woman nearly fainted and said my aunt who was Nukhem Messing [ph], the best-known baker in the city, have their store right next block.

MARGO N: In Lemberg?

L. NASH: No, here. I should go there. Before I left, my mother asked me to be sure not to depend or ever find it necessary to ask for any favors from my aunt, but here I was. I had no other alternative but going where this woman had sent us. Well, we got there. My aunt got all excited. She got angry --- why I didn't let her know that I was coming. She would have taken care of me. Took me quite a job to explain to her how I came and why this woman sent me over. I asked her ---- I didn't understand why this woman acted so strange. When she -- when she always before they left for America, she asked my mother to be sure that I should come there. And my aunt didn't know, couldn't explain But she said maybe people have boarders and maybe she all ready has enough boarders she didn't have any room for you. Well, that was the best explanation I could get.

My aunt sent out to buy a mattress which was put on the floor. That's where she could accommodate me. When everything was set, after dinner I asked my aunt how I can get a job, what shall I do. She said if you buy the Jewish paper, they have ads of different works. The next day, I bought the Tageblat (Daily Sheet) and I saw an ad that said, "Paper box makers wanted. Learners will also get paid." I showed this to my aunt and she said, "Oh, that's only two blocks from here." Her store was on Ludlow Street and this was on Orchard Street. I walked up the two blocks and my initials were the same as the initials here. I looked at the sign and I saw Orchard, Orchard, O-R-C-H-A-D. Well, I didn't understand that this meant Orchard. I waited a policeman came over and I asked him. He didn't understand what I want --- what I asked. He took me over to a cigar stand on the corner who was Jewish. I showed him the ad and he said that's right next-door in the basement. I went down there and showed them the ad. He said, "All right, come to work on Sunday." I went home, told my aunt I got a job as a paper box maker and I'll get paid from beginning on.

MARGO N: Was the reason that you worked on Sunday because he was Jewish and he didn't open on Saturday?

L. NASH: Yes, he was closed on Saturday. On Saturday night I was impatient. I wanted to be sure that I wouldn't miss it on Sunday. I told my aunt I'm going up to look to see if the place was still there. Sure enough when I got there, it was light and I saw him working. I went down and what I saw him doing I asked if I could help him. He was satisfied. And he showed me what to do and he was satisfied the way I did the work. But after an hour I got scared that my moth--- my aunt wouldn't know what happened to me so I explained to him and I went back home. Sunday morning when I came there I all ready knew what to do. I worked the whole day. He was satisfied with what I was doing. I did the work just as it was necessary, but I also saw a man working at the other end doing some very high-class work by comparison.

During the day when I had a chance, at 6 o'clock when my work was through I went over and asked him what he was doing. He ex-- told me. I asked if I could help him. He was satisfied, he even showed me how to help him, and I worked till 10 o'clock. And from there on every day, I worked till 6 o'clock on my job and after that I worked for him until he stopped-- 10 sometimes 11 o'clock at night. At the end of the week came on Tuesday, payday. I saw him paying everybody but me. I asked him how come? He said, "Well, you didn't bargain with me." I said, "All right, thank you, I wouldn't come to work anymore." "Oh," he said, "No, I want you to come to work, I like what you were doing. I'll give you a dollar a week." I said, "No." And so I was stubborn until he reached three dollars.

When he reached three dollars I got scared. I didn't think I ought to ask for any more. I agreed. For that week, he wouldn't pay me nothing. At the end of the second week, I got three dollars from him and two dollars from the other man who was working piecework and I helped him. So I all ready had five dollars. But I realized that I think I should get more money. I told my man that unless I get more money I wouldn't come to work the next day. He agreed to pay me five dollars without any question. At the end of the second week I got five dollars from him and I got five dollars from the piece worker for helping him. By that time I all ready knew how to do his work, that I could even take that job. That was three weeks. On the fourth week there was no more work.

My boss said to me he doesn't want me to leave, but if I'll stay for three dollars a week, I should stay and wait until he gets more work. Well, I didn't originally come here to become a paper box maker. I didn't know whether that could develop into a big business. I came here to be a tailor. My uncle's stepbrother who was working in a skirt factory and I spoke to him at different times, I asked him if I couldn't go there and try to learn how to make skirts the way he did. He said he would talk to his boss. He did and told me to come there Saturday night. When I got there Saturday night the man said, "All right, get a machine and work two weeks free and I'll teach you." I all ready had my experience with the paper box man. I said, "I don't work free. If you'll agree that I work, I'll get a machine." --- because that was the

custom that every operator had to bring his own machine --- "I'll leave it to you at the end of the week how much I earned, but I must get paid from the beginning on." His wife was there. He didn't want to agree with it, but I seemed to have appeal to her. She liked the way I proposed to him and she begged him to let me have it.

Sunday morning, I went looking. He gave me two addresses where to hire machines. Sunday morning I went to those two places and neither one of them gave me a machine for three weeks. I went back to him to ask what could be done. When I got there I saw two machines standing idle. I said, "Well, can't I use one of those machines?" He said, "Yes, you could, but those are old-fashioned ones." "Well," I said, "I have no alternative. I'll try to work on an old-fashioned one." He showed me how to thread it, gave me a box of rags, I worked for about two hours sewing rags together, then I went over--he never came near me-- I went over and I said, "Look, here is all the rags you gave me how I sewed them together. If there is any corrections, show it to me and if not, give me regular work, something to do.

He found no fault so he gave me some work to do which I did. Then he did come almost every half-hour to see what I was doing and he was satisfied. At the end of the week-- after 6 o'clock, I --- everybody was leaving and he was staying there so I asked him what he was doing and he showed me. I said, "Can I help you?" And so for the whole week I worked until 6 o'clock on the work that he gave me. After 6 o'clock, I helped him what he was doing. Saturday night I went there because I knew that he would be there and he gave me two dollars with strict instructions to be sure never to mention it to anybody, otherwise, I'll spoil his whole business. And to prove it that I'm taking advantage of him, he said, "You see this man, which was my uncle's brother, brought his brother two weeks ago and I'm still not going to pay him and now you are getting paid from the beginning. I promised.

After the second week, I all ready did make skirts like everybody else only I wasn't taught the finishing. I asked him to teach me how to finish. He promised to do it the next week. His wife was there again and she was happy to hear the results, and during the discussion between him, his wife, and myself, she suggested that I should go to look for a place that does better work, higher priced work. This was the cheapest kind of skirts that were being made, cotton skirts. He didn't like the idea, but the way she appealed to him in my favor, he kind of thought it would be a good idea for my sake, although he didn't like it. And he promised that he would teach me how to finish skirts and he would also talk to a neighbor in the same building who was doing better work to see if I can get a job there.

I worked with him for the third week. During the time we talked to the fellow in the building and he kind of thought he could give me a job. I finished working for him the third week, he gave me five dollars, and for the fourth week I was supposed to go to the other place. By that time my machine that I had ordered was due so it was delivered to the other place. And when I got there he gave me some of his poor work to work on which he was satisfied, and I ---- took me --- I was very slow at it, but he was satisfied with what I was doing. There too, when it

came in the evening, after 6 o'clock everybody left, I asked him what he was doing, would he mind if I helped him. He agreed, and I used to work there every night 10, 11 o'clock, helping him for free. But for what I did in the skirt work he helped me to improve so that at the end of the week I got twelve dollars. This was piecework.

I was there exactly three weeks. Between my savings - oh, yes, I forgot -- . On the second week when I worked in the paper box and I got ten dollars, I came to my aunt and I told her that now since I know that I can earn money, it would be a good idea if I find a place to live in. She said that was a good idea and since she told me that the woman which I was supposed to go to originally might have boarders, I went there first and that's when I learned it was true. She admitted to me that since she came to America, her husband was sick and couldn't get a steady job. And they lived on mostly on the three boarders that she had and that took all the room that she had and she didn't want to admit to me at that time, but this time she admitted all this to me and told me that she has no room, but I should go to another place. And I went to the place that she recommended. My rent was three dollars a week including breakfast and wash, laundry. In accordance with my earning, I was a rich man. I could even save money. And so it was. Between the paper box maker and the first job that I had with the skirt and the second job that I had as a skirt operator, I all ready saved up fifteen dollars. And I knew that all I needed was six dollars a week to live on. So whatever I had left over I sent home.

I was there three weeks and it looked like I was going to start making a lot of money and there was no more work, which shouldn't scare me although I had always sent away all the money, but I still had thirty dollars which I never touched. This was a reserve. That morning I lost the thirty dollars. I'm sure even today that either the one of the boarders or even the woman whom I lived with picked my pockets. Because I couldn't have lost it in the street the way I had it in my pants pocket and that day we had about ten inches of snow. And I couldn't have, I never put my hands into the pants pocket my entire walk from where I lived to where my shop was, so I couldn't have lost it anywhere and still I didn't have it when I got there. Here I was, no work, no money. I knew all ready how to look for a job. I took the paper and it said, "A butcher boy wanted, can be a greenhorn, but must be a butcher from the old country."

I decided I'm going for that job although I never saw meat outside of to eat it. I never saw a butcher in my city, and the butcher in our city was supposed to have been graded to the lowest grade of citizen. But I have to get to work right away. Five o'clock in the morning I got up, got on the trolley car. This was on Second Avenue and 90th Street. When I got there the place was still closed. It was good and cold but I had to wait. A few minutes later a truck came over, took a part of an animal, the door was open, he opened the door, went in, put it on a hook, and then he went and got some other stuff, put it on the counter and said to me, "Are you waiting for the job?" I said, "Yes." Well, he says, "You can go inside and sit down. The boss lives in the back of the store. He'll be out soon." And so I did. A few minutes later the boss came out and said, "You are looking for the job?" I said,

"Yes." "Are you a butcher boy?" He took over the meat from the hook and he said, "Take it apart." I says, "Wait a minute. You may be doing it differently than I was doing it at home. Show me how you are doing it. [Laughs] Show me how you are doing it and I'll copy.

He did and I watched very carefully. When he got through taking the meat apart and came to the bone, he said, "Well, this you know how to do." Well, I was afraid all ready to say no. I took that bone and with the saw, --- he gave me a saw --- and 90 percent of the sawing went on my left arm. I didn't know how to hold the saw in my hand and I never knew a bone, but I managed it. I cut myself a part --- good deal. He laughed and I said, "I'm too nervous. I would like the job and I'm trying to do the best but I'm too nervous." He took that as an excuse. After a week's time I was able to do everything the way he did, just as good as he did. He liked me, the wife liked me, there were two children there, and she had two brothers that were still in high school. I got acquainted with them and they started teaching me English.

END TAPE ONE, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE

ONE, SIDE B

MARGO N: Where were they from? What country?

L. NASH: Russian.

MARGO N: Russian Jewish?

L. NASH: Well, you want to have a joke on that too?

MARGO N: All right.

L. NASH: I'll give it to you. She had two brothers and I got acquainted with them and they started teaching me Russian. On Friday night ---- oh, my job was food, board, and ten dollars a month ---. On Friday night, we had the meal which was usual, chicken soup and noodles. The soup was too cloudy to me - too cloudy, and I asked her how she was doing it. She didn't know what I was asking. I said, "Well, there is so much flour in the soup, what did you do?" She said, "Nothing, I made noodles and I put them in." I said, "My mother didn't do it that way. My mother, when she made the noodles, she first cooked the noodles and threw that water away and then she used the noodles clean for the soup." For the moment she was not satisfied, but the next Friday she did what I told her and they were all happy that this meal looked much different, more appetizing.

I got so used to those people and they liked me so much that I almost thought that I would become a butcher, although I knew if my mother would ever hear that I was a butcher she would die. I was there for three months, exceedingly happy. Everything was going my way and every month when I got the ten dollars I mailed it home because what I needed for personal use, like cigarettes or carfare for Saturday to go down town, I made it in tips. At the end of the third month he came home one day all excited and started scolding my why I went to look for a job. I never did. I never dreamed it. Because I would either become -- go

back to the skirt operator or I was going to remain a butcher. And to remain a butcher I was so happy with them I wouldn't think of anything else. When he insisted I was looking for a job elsewhere, I got hurt, hurt so badly that I said, "Well, if that's what you insist on, you'll never trust me anymore and I wouldn't be happy here anymore. I am going to look for a job."

And the next day I looked for an ad, "Butcher boy wanted, must be a --- must know how to drive a horse." I went for that job. This was on 125th Street. I worked for a kosher butcher; this was not a kosher butcher. But I told him, "I can't come until Saturday night. I must give my man a week's notice to get himself another boy." I liked the job too much to walk out on him unexpectedly. "Yes," he said, "but how do I know you'll come?" I said, "I'll give you a deposit." I went home, got a pair of pants, brought it to him, gave him as a deposit that I was coming there Saturday. I told my man to get a boy. Whether he did or not I don't know, but it came Saturday, I packed up my stuff and I said, "I'm leaving." He didn't say anything, and I was for the moment surprised that he would he would just let me go without saying anything. When I get to the other place the man didn't recognize me. I said, "Wait a minute." I said, "You have my pants as a security that I was coming here."

And he saw the way I was insistent he said, "All right, come in the back." The two of them went in the back of the store and he explained to me, he said, "Your boss, when I asked him for a reference as you told me to, begged me not to take you, and he appealed to me. He wants you back; he doesn't want to lose you. The reason why he accused you that way is because he wanted to give you a raise and he didn't know how. So he put it up to you to demand a raise and since you didn't demand a raise, he just doesn't want to lose you and he begged me not to take you. So I got myself another boy." "Well," I said, "That's very nice of you and it's very nice of him too, but I have a deposit here, I have a job here, you don't have to hire me, I'm going to get paid." "Oh," he said, "If that's the case, and that's the recommendation you have, I'm going to get you a job." He went right to the telephone and he called up another man and he told him exactly the situation and he said, "If you need a boy, here is a good one." And he needed one to drive a horse.

He said, "I've got you a job in a kosher butcher, so It'll be more to your liking." And he went right out, took his truck and drove me up to 156th Street, I think it was. This man accepted me and he said, "We haven't got much work on Sunday, only deliveries, so we will clean up now and then in the morning I'll go with you to make the various deliveries." Sunday morning came; the wagon -- horse and wagon came in front of the store. We picked up the deliveries and he showed me exactly where to go, what to do and how to go about it. The next morning he said to me, "Well, go ahead." The stable was two blocks away from there. He said, "Go and hitch up the wagon and I'll give you deliveries for this morning." Well, I never knew how to drive a horse. I was never behind one, but I wouldn't admit to him. I went to the stable and sure enough, there was a Russian in charge. I gave him a dime and I said, "Here is for a can of beer. Hitch up the horse and wagon for me," which he did. I drove in the front of the store, he gave me the deliveries, I made the

deliveries, came back, everything was satisfactory. The work in the shop I knew so well that there was no question about that.

MARGO N: Were you able to drive the horse?

L. NASH: Never drove a horse in my life before.

MARGO N: But at that time you learned?

L. NASH: Well, from then on. The next day, I didn't think I was going to give that man ten cents every day to hitch up the wagon, so I gave him ten cents and I said, "Let me see how to do it myself." He did and so for about another two days I would still give him ten cents to stand by to see that I do it right. Everything was satisfactory. I worked there three weeks ----

MARGO N [Laughs] Only three weeks?

L. NASH and the man admitted to me then that he was surprised. I was the only boy that could stay there long on account of the horse. He said everybody he had --- and he told me his life's history, that he was a rich man, lost his business, and had to give everything up ---- but he didn't want to give up this horse which he now still has. This horse was a trotter, not used to be driven with a wagon behind him, with a heavy truck behind him. But I did so well that he was overjoyed. I did so well because I didn't know how. Whenever I had to make a delivery, I tied the horse up either to a lamppost or to a - to a water hydrant. The other boys never did. That's why they had trouble. Either the horse ran away with them or he kicked somebody, and with me everything was fine. So, I was happy again. I got a new job, the family was nice, although they lived upstairs and I lived downstairs. But everything was wonderful.

The month ended, I got fifteen dollars, and I had nice tips over there, too. I sent that money home. This was in the middle of the week. On Saturday, he said to me, "You know what," on Saturday morning I got up, got myself dressed, intending to go down town to meet some of the people that I knew and also to see if I can't get back into the skirt operating. He comes down when I'm all dressed ready to go, and says, "Go and hitch up the horse to a carriage. I have a carriage and I'll take you along riding with the family." I said, "I'm sorry. First place, if you wanted me --- I'm sorry I'm not gonna undress to go and hitch up your horse." He said, "You don't have to, you can do it like this." I said, "No, I'm --- I value my clo-I value my clothes too much to dirty myself in hitching up a horse and I'm not interested in your ride." He got excited and he said, "If that's the case, you have no job." I said, "All right." I went down town and immediately went to the woman where I had lived before and I told her I'm coming back tonight to live if she has room for me.

She gave me the key to come in because I told her I may come in very late. She gave me the key to come in and at night I went up there to get my clothes, the women were sitting plucking chickens, which was the usual custom on Saturday night, that she and I would pluck the

chickens for the week, and she started crying, begging me not to leave. I said, "No, I only get discharged once. I was discharged and I'm through." Of course, I was independent because I --- wherever I was, I was liked. He wouldn't say a word. He got so mad that when I finally got all packed--no, she begged me so I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll do you a favor. I'll help you pluck the chickens tonight, clean it up for you, but I'm positively leaving, I'm not going to stay." I did, the way the way I learned to do that work, I did it better than she did. Everybody was satisfied. When we were through, I went back, dressed myself again, packed up my valise, ready to go. He was so mad he wouldn't pay me, which he owed me for about four days, which made it worse. Probably if he had paid me, and he would have asked something, I would have remained because I had asked down town and they told me they didn't have ant work yet, so I figured I'll stay another few weeks. But since he was so mad and he wouldn't have any-wouldn't say anything, I left. Sunday morning, I took the paper looking for a job. There was none. Monday, by that time I all ready knew how to read an English paper, I looked at the English paper, no job.

MARGO N: What year was this all happening, still 1900?

L. NASH: 1900. Monday I all ready looked in the English paper, no job. Tuesday there was two kinds of jobs-- they didn't fit, I didn't fit. One doctor wanted a boy, that I didn't know how to do and the other job I didn't understand. But I had no more money. I said to my woman where I was boarding, I said, "You know my condition. You may have to trust me until I get a job." "Oh," she said, "No, that I can't afford to do, I can't afford to trust anybody. You have a rich aunt. Go to her, let her give you --- lend you money and you stay." I said, "Oh, no, I don't go for my aunt and I'm not going to stay here. I'll have to take care of myself." I went to grocers and butchers and asked them if there is a chance of making some deliveries where I could make a ---get a tip. One grocery man told me; Thursday and Friday he has enough extras that he may need an extra boy. The butchers, nobody had a need for anyone for deliveries. I asked a woman if she would permit me to leave my valise there. This she agreed to, and thinking that maybe I will wind up going to my aunt, but I didn't, I slept in the park. On rainy days I slept in the basements. There was a free bathhouse on Delancey and Essex Street. You could get up

END TAPE ONE, SIDE B

BEGIN TAPE

TWO, SIDE A

-for towels and soap you have to pay. So I got another shirt and underwear from my valise and used the shirt and underwear instead of a towel ---without soap. Once in a while I picked up a piece of soap there from somebody else. I washed--when I got through wiping myself, I washed the shirt and underwear and there was a kindly old man in charge of the bathhouse and he was satisfied when I explained to him my condition, to take care of my watch. I hung it on the roof and he saw to it that it shouldn't get lost. For three week, this was my life. On Thursday and Friday I would make a couple of pennies. There was no work anywheres, not in the skirt factories; the paper box man went out of business. There was nothing else that could be done.

On Riverton Street between, I think it's between Orchard and Ludlow ---- between Orchard and I don't remember exactly what street it is. But it's on Riverton Street, there is a school there and everybody, carpenters, plumbers, painters, used to go there on the morning and wait for somebody to come looking for help. I was there, too, every morning. Carpentry I couldn't take, painting I couldn't take, but I was there every morning seeing if someone ---somebody is looking for someone to help. One morning, a man comes over; he wants men to take off, to clean the rubbish from new buildings. Nobody wanted the job. I said, "I'll take it." He asked me to show my hands. I showed him my hands and he looked at them and he said, "No, you wouldn't do." I said, "Wait a minute, how much do you pay?" He said, "A dollar and a half a day." I said, "Will I make ten cents?" He later admitted to me that he made me come because the way I put it to him, he was - he saw I need the ten cents and he was afraid to give it to me which he was gladly give it to me to leave him alone. But he got scared and he told me to come.

When I got there he explained, "You take a barrel, go up six flights of stairs, fill the barrel, bring it down, throw the rubbish on the street, and go up for the next barrel." There were no stairways. There were gangplanks instead of stairways going up. I went up, filled the barrel, the foreman saw what I was doing and he started laughing and he was Russian, spoke nothing but Russian. I said, "What are you laughing about?" I could speak Russian.

MARGO N: Where did you learn to speak Russian?

L. NASH: I could speak Russian because in our city our main language was Polish, second language was Russian, and third language was German and I knew all the three languages well. I said, "What are you laughing about?" He said, "Go and pick it up." I couldn't even bend it. He said, "That's what I'm laughing about. All you do is take two or three shovels at a time, not a barrel full." He helped me dump this barrel, put on about three shovels. In order not to spoil my clothes, I took off my shirt and my jacket and took a burlap bag, cut a hole, put it over my body, put the barrel on my back and down I went. As I was going down, I saw a hole on each floor in the wall. On the way up I looked in every hole. I didn't know what it was there for. It was open all the way down. I came up and I asked the foreman what is it? He didn't know. Lunchtime the boss came and I asked him, "What are these hole down there." He said, "Oh, that's for the dumbwaiters."

Well, I knew what a dumbwaiter was. I said, "When will the dumbwaiters come in?" "Oh," he said, "They don't come in until after the building is completely finished and cleaned and painted." I said, "Then why can't we use these holes to throw these garbage down?" I said, "If you throw this garbage through those holes you'll be able to get men and you'll need one-tenth of the men than what you are needing now and you'll do your job faster." He said, "That's very smart." He said, "It'll go to the basement. Then you'll have to carry it up." I said, "Can't we find a way of protecting that?" "Well," he said, "Let's see." The two of us went down and we came on the ground floor and I said, "Why can't we close it up here?" So instead of going to the basement It'll fall down

here. He said, "That's very smart." He said, "Don't carry anymore rubbish from the roof. Sit around and wait. I'm going to buy lumber and I'm going to get a carpenter, we are going to do the job just the way you said.

Well, it wasn't exactly the way I said. It was better. Between him and the carpenter, they figured out a better way of doing it. It wasn't so easy, it was easy for me to say it, but when you have to make slant boards and you have to support them, it was quite a job, which I didn't know at the time, only developed when the carpenter came. He went right out to look for the lumber and he came back about an hour later and said, "I can't get the lumber now." It'll be delivered in the morning and I'm going to get a carpenter to do it." In the morning, the lumber came, the carpenter came, the carpenter said he can't work alone, he needs another man. They had to go to get another man. Between him, myself and the carpenters, it took us until noontime to complete the job. At noontime the boss, the builder came. When he saw what we did, he raised a rumpus. He said, "You are going to spill --- spoil his building because It'll damage the walls, It'll damage down below."

Well, it took some time between me and him to satisfy him to let us have the job. There had to be some changes made, which was done, and the first start of this was that we put one man on the sixth floor, we didn't need more than one man to throw garbage in the holes, two men would be one in each other's way, so I suggested that we put one man on the sixth floor and one man on the fifth floor and even one on the fourth floor so the garbage can come down fast and when it comes on the ground floor we would carry it out in the street. The first shovel of stuff that was thrown on the sixth floor, a brick hit the wall and fell out in the man-on-the-fifth-floor's eye. [Laughs] The man came running down with a swollen eye. I took him to the drugstore; I had sense enough to know that to go to the drugstore, the drugstore man said, "That's not my job, go to a doctor." He sent me to a doctor and the doctor fixed him up and the man made no complaint. He went back to work with an eye bandaged up. So that was All right.

When the boss came in the evening I told him all about it, he took care of that. That night, he gave me three dollars and he said, "From now on, you stay down here and supervise the downstairs and the other man will supervise the upstairs. You have nothing else to do but stay around here and watch it and I'll give you twenty dollars a week." This was my first three dollars that I earned in four weeks. I decided now I'm going to splurge. The entire three weeks I lived on a black radish for a penny a day for fear that my pennies that I was making Thursday and Friday would run out on me. So all I lived on was a black radish for three weeks for a penny. I said, "Now I'm going to have a regular meal." I went to Delancey Street, had a seven-course dinner for thirty-five cents. Then I said, "I'm going to sleep in a bed," Because in the park, even though I was satisfied, the policeman wasn't. And I had trouble getting woken up in the middle of the night going elsewhere.

In the Bowery, I could get a bed for ten cents. I went to the Bowery. When I gave the man the ten cents he said, "Your straw hat is too nice. You better watch out, you are going to lose it." So I put the

straw hat in my shirt, my jacket I rolled up for a pillow, went upstairs, I got a canvas cot, laid, down for the first time in three weeks, slept through the night, and in the morning I went to the bath house and got my bath, and went to my job. All that week, everything was fine, satisfactory. The man wanted me to stay with him, but during the week when I saw the way he looked and the builder who was the rich man looked filthy, dirty, I said, "I can't be a builder. My wi-my mother when she come here, she wouldn't like it. She'll die to see me in that kind of condition. "I said, "I'm sorry, I'm not going to stay with you. I'll take the twenty dollars, I need it but I'm quitting." And sure enough, I went to the skirt factory and the man was very happy to see me. He said, "We got in work this week. In fact, I was going to look for you. I didn't know where you lived. And I was going to look for you." So I was set, started working. But during the four weeks since I left my butcher shop, I didn't write home. My mother got scared and she decided that if I don't write home, there is something wrong and she wouldn't have it. My father must sell his business and come here, which my father agreed, and that business wasn't much to sell, but he sold out, ready to go.

My mother said my father used to borrow money once a year from the bank. He had a good credit with them, and pay it off during the year, weekly. His credit was so good that he also guaranteed for my uncle, his brother. My mother wouldn't let him leave until he pays his debt and his brother's debt. He said, "She doesn't want to feel that in case his brother doesn't pay, that her family, she, did the bank out of it." So between paying my father's debts and paying his brother's debts, they didn't have enough money to come here together. So my brother and sister ---- my father and sister came here and my mother and brother was left home depending on my uncle to keep on paying the payments --- instead of the bank -- to her until we can send for her. When we got here I was all ready earning twenty, thirty dollars a week. My sister was handy enough to earn five, six dollars a week. My father didn't do so well, but he immediately asked, he wants mother her - here. If the family will be together we will manage with what we got.

To please my father, the woman I lived with was dealing with a customer peddler, buying stuff on installments. I said to the man, "I would like to get two steamship tickets for my mother." He said, "Steamship tickets we don't sell on installment." He said, "If I sell jewelry and you don't pay," he said, "I can take the jewelry back, but I can't take a steamship ticket back after she has gone." Well I said, "You are selling jewelry?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Then sell me the biggest watch and chain you can get and I will take it to the pawnshop and I'll get the money and pay you for the steamship tickets. He laughed. He said, "That's the craziest thing he ever heard of." He said he has sold jewelry to people who later found themselves in need of money. They went to the pawnshop, but never did anybody tell him that he wants to buy jewelry to pawn it. But the way I put it to him, he was kind of satisfied and he says, "I think you'll pay." The next day he brought a watch and chain for a hundred and fifty dollars. I said, "Now come - I wouldn't, I didn't know exactly how to handle myself in a pawn shop. He said, "No, they wouldn't lend you any money, you are not of age. You have to get your father to go." Well, my father didn't --- wasn't too smart about that. So we asked him to go with us. He did.

There were two kinds of pawnshops, one that charged three percent a month and one charged one percent a month. I said I'll go to the one percent. And the one percent wouldn't give us more than fifty dollars. I took the fifty dollars, gave it to him, said, "Here, that's my first installment on the tickets. By the time we will arrange to get my mother to come, I'll pay you the rest." ---- depending on my earnings and my sister's earnings. And we lived very economically, that I would be able to pay him off. Sure enough [Pause] my father got here I think in October. [Pause] The watch and chain was to be paid three dollars a week. On the steamship ticket I think we owed another thirty dollars. I don't know exactly now, but I think it was thirty dollars. It took me just a month to be sure that we pay him off on the steamship ticket and we sent it home. My mother meanwhile ---- my uncle stopped paying when he knew that the bank was paid off. He stopped paying. He didn't pay her anything. She was too proud to look for work at home. She did for a while, but then she went to her sister that lived about 150 miles away from Lemberg, to live with her.

We knew that. We sent her the tickets to where she is with my - with her sister. We got enough money to send her to come here. She never told us that my uncle didn't pay, but we kind of suspected that if she left Lemberg, that undoubtedly is because he wasn't paying. So we sent the money to come here. By that time I had established a good reputation with this customer peddler, that we were telling him that mother was coming. He gave us the tickets, we sent them home. When we told him that mother was coming, he himself bought a complete house outfit --- furniture, utensils, even a garbage pail, completed. And he helped us find an apartment across the street from where we lived, on Norfolk Street. and he furnished the apartment complete, all on payments. My mother and brother came here in February. He was 11 years old. I wanted him to go to school, [Pause] so in order to be able to go to school and earn some money for himself, we decided that he sell papers on the street. He went out one day, two days, he came home crying. He can't compete with the American boys. He can't speak, he can't sing, and he is not a fighter. He can't force his way like the others were running ahead one of the other in order to sell the paper. He couldn't do it so that was no good.

But a friend of mine got him a job in a pipe factory, which just worked in for him to go to night school. So he worked in the pipe factory and went to the night school. Six months later, my boss who had a partner, and the partner decided he wants to leave; he wants to go back to home

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END SIDE A, TAPE TWO

BEGIN

SIDE B, TAPE TWO

MARGO N: What business was this? The business?

L.NASH: Skirt operating. He wants to get back home. So I propose to my partner I become his partner. He knew I could do all the work as good as he did, everything. So he had no objections to my becoming his partner, but his wife did. Her brother, who was an operator and was

supposed to be a very -- was a presser, and he was supposed to be a very high-class presser, was making big money, was willing to invest five thousand dollars with him to go into business. But my partner said --- but my boss said no, he would rather take me without money than his brother-in-law. Who was so high-class, he said, he wouldn't fit in and he wouldn't do the work the way he wants it. So in order to show good will, I had my gold watch and chain that I all ready paid off and taken out from the hockshop, back to the hockshop, fifty dollars, gave it to him as a partner. And I became a partner with him. I immediately decided we were doing contracting work for big manufacturers who were making suits and the skirts they gave out. That's what we were doing. I said, "Why not start making skirts and sell it ourselves? Make skirts only and sell them," which he thought was a good idea.

We went to Hester Street. We bought bundles of remnants. He was a good tailor, a good mechanic; he could make a garment out of little pieces. And we made skirts and I went out to sell them. But I couldn't sell much retail because I couldn't sell a man a half a dozen of one kind. It's one of a kind. But I did the best I could. We then decided that we better look for a store so we can sell them retail. Retail, we can sell individual, single items. We found an empty store in the same building where I was carrying the rubbish down. The store had four rooms in the rear, so we had a store in the front big enough for our factory and he could live in the rear with his family. Our custom was that we started working Saturday night and we never quit until Friday. Friday I had to go home because my mother wanted the family together at home. Until Friday I never went home. But being that he lived in the back, so sometimes I went in and laid down and took a nap, he went back. Half the time, we never undressed. We slept bending down on the table. And that's how we lived and we were very happy and getting richer every day. . It got so that I said, "Well, we must start buying bigger pieces so I can make half a dozen of a kind to be able to sell it to storekeepers." When we started at that it looked that we were going to be able to go into business in a big way. So we decided to move west where manufacturers are who are dealing with retail trade.

Here we couldn't expect to get a customer, and I could go out enough times to sell because I was still operating and I was still helping him. We decided to move west, which we did. Then his wife got all excited. I'm ruining her life because we then also worked from Saturday night to Friday night and we didn't go home. So she started getting excited, she went to complain to my mother. And my mother said, "Look, it doesn't pay for you to break up a family. You like each other, you are very happy, everything is fine, but don't break up a family. Divide it, let him go, you go." He found that he had no alternative and he agreed that we divide up and he goes back to his family. This was three years later. Within these three years, he was drawing enough money to support a family and I was drawing enough money to buy cigarettes. So when we divided up all I had left - all I got was seven hundred dollars, he got two machines and some other utensils.

With seven hundred dollars, I didn't think I ought to start in business. I'm no mechanic outside of being an operator and a good one, but I couldn't make a pattern. For that I'd have to hire a designer. He

agreed with me that it would be kind of risky with seven hundred dollars to go into a business with an expense. He went to one of his countrymen who was just starting a business with twenty thousand dollars and he asked him to give me a job. When I was interviewed, I asked for twenty dollars a week. They said, "No, for twenty dollars a week, we can get an experienced salesman, a man who has been in the business for years. Where do you come in to ask for twenty dollars?" I got hurt and I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I only have seven hundred dollars and I'm not a mechanic. It's dangerous for me to go into business, but I am going in business now just because to spite you. In two years time, I'll be as rich as you." And I said, "Not because I'll make as much money as you have now, but you'll lose it." And so it was.

My mother liked the idea; she wanted her son to be in business. And I started, my sister, my father, and myself, neither one of us mechanics, but I started in business. A year later I met one of these partners and I said, "Well, how are you doing?" He said, "I'm afraid you cursed us." He says, "I'm afraid", he says, "I'm going to need you. We are losing money too fast." He said, "Just as you told us, the salesman" he says, "come in with fake orders. When we have the merchandise all ready to make delivery, they bring in a cancellation." He says, "we have to sell the goods for half. We are in trouble all the time." I said, "That's exactly what I expected. I didn't wish you any hard luck, but from the experience I had with meeting with different people, with different salesmen, when I was going out selling, and I knew how they handled the situations, I was afraid that this was what you were going to get into because from what I knew, from what my partners told me about you, the best you are were two good tailors. And you don't know the least understanding of how to handle a business." And I said, "You could have used me very well."

When we were buying remnants to make skirts, my partner found in one bundle a piece of goods that was 54 inches wide. He made a nice garment and it looked good. When I showed it to a retailer, he said they would buy a lot of it, but neither one of us knew where it come from, what kind of material it was. I decided I was going to find out. So all week long I was busy, but on Saturdays I would go down town and follow every kind of a truck that was carrying piece goods. Then get the name and address-- go there, and nobody knew what it was until one day I found a truck coming from L.F. Demmerich [ph]. I found that truck and went up looking through the different departments and sure enough I found it in one of the departments. I told them I want to buy a piece of good and I want to pay cash for it. He said, "We don't sell for cash. You've to go to the credit man and establish your credit and then we will sell it to you." When I went to the credit man and I explained who I was and what I was, and told him what I wanted to buy, he said, "What do you want to use that goods for?" I said we found a way of making nice skirts with it.

He said, "You fool you. This is used for undertakers. We cover coffins with that." A few months later we -- I finally convinced him that I want the goods and this was on a Saturday, he agreed to let me have a piece of goods. But told me definitely I must pay within ten days. He'll trust me and I must pay within ten days. The piece of goods weighed almost as much as I did. I took it on my shoulder and brought it

home. But I couldn't deliver it to my store because my fa-my partner was religious and so were my parents. I left it with the grocery store for the evening and in the evening I brought it in the store. A couple of weeks later a woman came in to us on an evening and said, "My husband found a piece of imported goods. Can you make a good skirt?" My partner said, "Yes, I think I can make you a good skirt. .Let me see the goods." She unpacked the bundle and that was the same 54-inch goods that we found that was being used for coffins. So not realizing that if he agreed with her that was imported goods, he could charge her a big price for making a skirt. But being conscientious, he laughed. He said, "That's imported goods? Here, you see that. Here are the skirts hanging with that." She grabbed the piece of goods, rolled it up, and ran home, went out. About two or three weeks later she came back. She said, "What am I going to do with it? Make a skirt out of it anyway." He said, "I want five dollars." She said, "Five dollars I should give you for that rag?" I

MARGO N: [Laughs]

L. NASH: I prospered slowly but steady, kept on growing. I moved from Spring Street to Gree----- yeah, from Spring Street to Greene Street to a bigger loft. Was doing well. I then moved to a bigger loft on 11th Street, doing well. I was on the 12th floor. I had two floors, the 11th and 12th floor. One day, my credit was good --- American Express ---- American Woolen Company was able to credit me with ten thousand dollars worth of goods which consisted of ten cases of jerseys. The goods came in one day. It was unpacked, put on the floor, and the next morning we came in, the goods was not there. How it ever disappeared, how it was taken out of there, nobody could figure out. I couldn't tell the police about it -- although I did call in the police and told them,-- but I begged them to please not publicize it because it because if my creditors would find out that I lost ten thousands dollars worth of goods, my credit would be cut and I would be out of business. They agreed. We did hunt quite a few places, but we never found the goods. Meanwhile I was pretty well stuck. I was short of ten thousand dollars although I had sixty days to pay it, but there was no chance of me getting in that different money so fast.

I sent my father to my uncle who was a very nice man and he liked me very much too because his oldest son was my age and he couldn't make him do the things that he learned that I was doing, that I got into business and so on. My father told my uncle that I was doing very well, which was true, that I would need some help in order to turn over to pay my immediate bills. He gave him two thousand dollars cash. Just at that time, A. D. Juliard, who were big manufacturers of corduroy, came out with a new corduroy and asked sixty cents a yard. I, who had experience from Europe on piece goods, on yarns and weaving, said that these goods isn't worth no sixty cents a yard, and I said to my brother who was at that time all ready with me, "Go and find me somebody who manufacturers corduroys and I will try and see if I can duplicate that goods for less money." He was a good hunter and he found a manufacturer making corduroy for baby carriages and other use of that kind that used a lot of starch. When he brought me the samples, I said, "Well, that's not good for us, but if you make this without starch, this is what I need."

I said, "Find out where the factory is." And the factory was in Massachusetts -- Lynn, Massachusetts. I said, "I'm going to the factory and I'm going to show them how to make that goods without starch." I did, the man listened to me, he made up the first piece of goods without starch. It wasn't good enough, so he made another piece of goods. It was just as good as Juliard's that was charging sixty cents a yard. My price was thirty cents. But, this was ten days credit on delivery. I gave him an order for ten cases of goods. When I told my brother about it, he fainted. He said, "Where are you going to get the money to pay for it?" I said, "I don't know, but I ordered it to pay in ten days." When the goods came, ten cases ----- a case of this goods was about six foot by six foot square. Ten cases of that took up half a block on 11th Street. When the man came up and told them, "I have ten cases of good for you," he went down and when he saw it lined up on the street, he fainted.

But while he was being picked up by people on the street, one fellow comes over and he says, "What have you got there?" He said, "What do you want, why are you bothering me now, I'm sick. How am I going to take care of that?" But one case was opened, so he saw it was corduroy, and he said, "Man alive, I'll buy the whole thing from you." I wasn't home then. I wasn't there at that time. Well, the goods was brought up. This man didn't let go. He went up with him; they opened up one piece of goods. He says, "How much do you want for it?" He says, "I don't know. Wait till Louie will come home, he'll tell you how much he wants." Now Juliard wanted sixty cents a yard less two percent, which meant two cents less --- fifty-eight cents. It cost me thirty. I asked him forty-five. He said, "I'll take it all." To cut a long story short, before the ten days were up I had all the money. This man bought almost all the goods. I meanwhile ordered another ten cases of goods and before about three months I made up the ten thousand dollars that was stolen from me on the piece goods there, and I was back in business, a successful merchant. Got more? [Long pause]

MARGO N: Mr. Nash, could you tell me, your name was changed, wasn't it?

L. NASH: Yes. My name was N-O-S-C-H-K-E-S. When I started in business, people laughed at it. I never had a chance to tell anybody over the telephone my name without --- without spelling it and even when I spelled it they laughed. They found it hard to copy. It got so that I made fun out of it when I gave my name to somebody. I would say, "My name is Nash -- Nosch a kiss. That went over for a while, but in business I had a tough time to explaining it. So I decided to change it, but while I was in business and I owed a lot of money, my lawyer used to say that it would be a hard thing to explain to notify the creditors. So I went along as it was. In 1920 when I was out of business I found that this was a chance for me to change the name and I changed it to Nash. N-A-S-H.

MARGO N: Thank you very much, Mr. Nash.

END SIDE B, TAPE TWO

BEGIN TAPE THREE, SIDE A

MARGO N: Today is December 14, 1973, and I'm speaking with Mr. Louis Nash, who came to this country at the age of nineteen, in the year 1900. He came from, Lemrich?

L. NASH: That's right.

VOICE: Lemberg.

MARGO N: Lembrich, Austria. And yesterday, Mr. Nash was 92 years old. Happy birthday, Mr. Nash. We've been talking before about the story of what it was like when you came to this country, and how you worked your way up from a paper box maker. And now we're to the year 1917, where you've come a long way. And please tell us, what happened; what was the next chapter in your life?

L. NASH: In 1917, I was engaged to be married. There was also quite a discussion about this country going to war. In came a young fellow, said to me, "You need a piece goods buyer." I asked him, "Who told you?" He says, "You're a piece goods buyer." I called from -- that man. He came down. I asked him, "Izzy, did you tell this man that I will need a new piece goods buyer." He said, "Yes." I said, "Why didn't you tell me?" He says, "My father doesn't want you to be worried, that in case I go to war, you would need another buyer. But he remembers that when he was sick in the hospital, you supported the family, you paid for all the bills, and you send me to the hospital everyday. And when he came out and he started paying back, you charged no interest. So he doesn't want you to be worried in the least. But, we - the entire family: my father, my uncle, my sister --- everybody has to go to war." I says, "What's all the excitement?" He says, "That's a gruesome story." I said, "Well I'm interested to know what got you all so excited to go to war." He says--. "And you're offering, you will all volunteer for it."

He says, "Yes, my grandparents were very wealthy people. My grandfather did business in Germany, Austria, and Poland. And whenever a, trouble started in Russia, where they came from; he was connected with all the high officials, and they would tell him in advance and he would pay off. But there were times, whenever he had to pay off; they gave him enough time to go and get the money, as much as five and ten-thousand roubles [Russian currency] at a time. For that, he usually went out to another county to get the money; so nobody knew but himself and the person who got the money.

This time, the man came in and says, 'You must get the money immediately, because I didn't realize, I didn't know how serious it was. But there is - they're all ready for the - with the -- pogrom for the Jews.' He had no alternative but go to the bank in town, and ask for ten thousand roubles. When he got the money, within a few minutes after he got home, a bunch of them came in and said, 'You got money from the bank, we want it.' And before there was any discussion, they said, 'Let's kill him.' They grabbed hold of him, took him in the kitchen, laid him on the table, and one fellow took a hatchet and chopped off his head -"

MARGO N: His head?

L. NASH: Yes. "The housekeeper was there. When she saw it, she ran out to her husband and asked him to hitch up the wagon to take the rest of the family out of town (Blows nose). He did. When he got out of town, the first, the nearest border they knew to go to was Germany. That was the nearest border. They also had permits so they could pass any borderline without any passports. So halfway out, before they got to the border; the man stopped the wagon and says, "You have your jewelry with you." He knew that these were confidential people, and they knew that she always carried her jewelry with her. He says, "Give it to us, I want it." Well she had no alternative. Here she was, her husband was killed, she was with her children in a wagon in the wilderness. So she opened up her bosom, took out the jewelry and gave it to him.

As he drove over to the --- passing the border, he didn't even go any further than just where they were permitted to go, told them to get out To find their way where they were going, and he drove right back. She found her way, she got to the people that they knew over there, they were doing business with, told them the story, and asked for someone to go to at least give her husband a decent burial. No Jew would have wanted to take the chance. The Rabbi didn't want to take the chance, but the Rabbi said he will talk to the Priest; maybe he will go and take care of it. He went to the Priest and he offered him a big contribution to the church, and the Priest agreed. He took two German officials, and they went to the town, and they performed a burial. Nobody else was there. From then on, the family knows nothing what happened to the estate, to everything else, but she had money in different countries, and that was accumulated and that's how they got to America."

So he says his parents are bitter about Russia, and they surely don't want to, they surely want this Amer-- country to win the war because that's the only place where a Jew can live comfortable. (Brief pause) He finally went, volunteered for the war, and this young fellow started working for me. When I was married and I went for a honeymoon, we were away for three months of the honeymoon. When we came back from the honeymoon, I found that this young fellow did an excellent job and made a lot of money for me. I gave him a five thousand dollar cash bonus, and I told him, "I have a special proposition for you. I'm busy. I am involved now in six different companies. You're --- this is a new business for me, the piece goods business, that you're doing now. I wouldn't have time to attend to it, I'll give you an opportunity to make a lot of money." But, I stipulated certain terms, that showed very conservative. He accepted it, the whole year, the rest of 1917 and 1918. He made an awful lot of money for me and for himself.

In November of 1918 when the war was settled, I called him in and I said, "You go out now, to place orders for two-million dollars worth of goods." He had already by that time established himself with me so that he could talk freely, and he was of especially fresh nature. He said, "Oh no, I'm not gonna be a party to that." I didn't know what he meant; he didn't understand what I meant. By the time he realized that what I told him to

do was the right thing to do, he, it was too late, we couldn't place any more orders with anybody. Nobody wanted to take any more orders from us. Well he realized I was right. But, all, the beginning of 1918, he was still making a lot of money, still trading in piece goods, he was still making money.

In July, when I came back from my honeymoon, prohibition started. My brother-in-law, who was in the saloon business, was put out of business, and he was not the kind of man that would go bootlegging. So, he was out of business. My father-in-law was out of business. I put my father-in-law and my brother -my brother-in-law (that's my wife's hus- brother), in the piece goods business, under the care of my buyer. From (Brief pause) September 1917 until July nineteen-twen-- nineteen, they made a hundred thousand dollars to their own credit. I suspected that something is gonna happen that I didn't like. Well I was involved in so many different business, I couldn't just sto, and go out of business. But I did tell my father-in-law, "You got a hundred-thousand dollars? Grab it; put it in the savings bank, the interest alone will be enough for you to live on. Don't stay in business, I am afraid something is going to happen, I don't know what, where, or how, but something is not, doesn't look good to me."

MARGO N: What year was this?

L. NASH: 1919. I said, "You better grab that money and run." Well, my brother-in-law who was so smart, he said, "Ha, ha! That's not right." He - I -- I am jealous of them for having made that money. And the buyer, would, was making extra profits, which was not true. I trusted that buyer absolutely. He never took a penny fr--, a penny that I didn't know. So he said, "Well, we don't need you anymore, we can go business ourselves. With a hundred-thousand dollars..." This way they had no expense, everything was done from my office.

They ran out, rented an office, and started doing business for themselves. My brother-in-law --- I started a dress business in his name, and that was doing well. The money that he got from selling this, his saloon business, his liqueurs, when they went out of business, they bought a home. I told him to buy a home without a mortgage, which they did. But they did so well during that year, the dress business did so well during that year that my sister got an idea. She doesn't want to live in the neighborhood with her children to grow up; she wanted to go to a better neighborhood. I begged them not to because I said, "I don't know what's going to happen. It's going too fast, something is going to happen. I don't know what, when or how, but ---stay where you are." No, they wanted a better home.

MARGO N: Where were they living?

L. NASH: In Brooklyn. At that time, they were building little homes for eight and ten thousand dollars a whole house. They had one, and they decided that they have to go to a bigger home, in a better neighborhood. They bought a house, with an eighteen thousand dollar mortgage. (Long pause) In August of 1919, I called all of my executives together, and I told them all, "I will pay you a year's salary, every one of you, and I want to get out of business right away. Now." The piece goods buyer who

had made a lot of money these two years (and I had just hired a credit man to take care of the credits of my old businesses) didn't like the idea. All of a sudden, here he is -- I'm going out of business, what is he gonna do? And the credit man got an exceptionally good job with the promise of bonuses.

So the two of them decided they were gonna go to the banks where I owed a half a million dollars. They were gonna ask the bankers. They asked the four bankers to hold a meeting with me, and the piece goods buyer got two of my biggest creditors in peace goods, one in the silk business and one in the woolen business, they should come to the meeting. As a result we had four bankers, two manufacturers, a commission houseman, at this meeting. They asked me, "Why do you want to get out of business now?" I said, "Well, it's almost twenty years, that I worked very hard, I didn't have a day's vacation. I want to take a vacation now. I want to get my cash, I want to get the money, I want to lay my hand on actual cash. From the interest on that money I will be able to live very comfortable. After the excitement's over I don't know what's going to happen, but I'm sure something is in the air..."

MARGO N: What made you so sure? What was it in the air?

L. NASH: That's what I did. (laughs)

MARGO N: (Laughs) Something wasn't,

L. NASH: It was going all in one way. Nothing in the world, the ocean doesn't go all one-way. Nothing in the world goes one way. Everything has to stop and go back. Not much, I don't know how much, but there should be a change. That's what I was looking for. And you would--can't go always on one - one way. That was my way of figuring! Well, the result was, the suit man, who was 6' -- 7'4" tall, got up and banged on the table and said, "Louie, you're crazy. You go into the lunatic asylum and I'll pay the bill."

MARGO N: (Laughs)

L. NASH: He said, "Right now, we are delivering to you Georgettes for two dollars a yard less eight percent. You are the only customer on our books that has a credit for sixty days; everybody else has to pay in ten days. We are now going to open these same Georgettes anywheres between three and a half to three-seventy-five a yard. You are getting the goods, when a piece of goods gets delivered to you at two dollars a yard, somebody is there paying you four dollars cash, net cash. You crazy enough to go out of business now, with this profit?" I said, "Yes, I still wanna go out of business, and I'll tell you what I'll do. You say you only allow the Georgettes at two dollars a yard? Gimme fifty-thousand dollars and I'll give you back my, my contract with you."

"Oh," he says, "We don't owe you that much merchandise." And so the woolen man had the same story. He was also delivering goods to me at two dollars a yard, I was getting four dollars a yard, we never had to open up a bundle of goods for net. Somehow or other the customers already knew that I'm getting goods and they were there with the cash and paid

me. The woolen man said the same thing. The decision was that I should stay in business-- that was their decision. As we walked out (clears throat), I said to my piece goods man, "Abe, you know what? I don't know (pause)" Oh yeah, the silk man said, "I don't owe you that much goods, but I will pay you seventy-five cents a yard for all the goods that I owe you." So on our way home, I said to my piece goods man, "Abe, you know what? Figure out how many yards of goods he owes me and I'll take seventy-five cents a yard." He said, "Why do that? This is the goods that we are making the most profit on. And what more, if what you are right, if there is a break, and the goods does go down, this is the goods we are using ourselves, in our own factories. So we can utilize it, and use it up!"

But he says, "I have contracts, I have a lot of contracts of piece goods - that we never used. I just bought it for speculation," He says, "I'm gonna see what I can do with those!" I says, "Go right ahead." He went back to the factory, he looked up his files, and he picked up four contracts. He said, "I'm gonna see what I can do with these four contracts." He called up the commission house who was factoring for these four mills, and he said he wants to come down and wants to talk about selling the contracts. They made an appointment with him the next morning. The next day, at exactly twelve-o'clock, he came back with the four contracts typed on the cancellation with a check for fifty-five hundred dollars. All I had to do was sign these contracts in front of the notary and the check is mine.

I said, "You know, I'm going to go -- take you down with me, notarize these four contracts, and I'm going to no-- certify that check. I don't wanna-" He says, "With this commission house, this check you want to certify?" I says, "Yes, I want to be sure now that a deal is a deal." And so it was. We went down, I signed it - contracts -he was going to deliver them to the commission house and I went to the bank to have the check note certified. I got the check certified, got them the subway from there, straight up to Broadway where they were selling Cadillac cars. And I says, "Here, I want a Cadillac car." He laughed at me. He says, "What model do you want?" I says, "A 1919 model!" (Laughs) He says, "There is no such thing! But I can sell you a 1918 model, if you give me a thousand dollar bonus."

The cars were that time selling around forty-two or forty-three hundred dollars, and here and I had a certified fifty-five hundred dollar check. I says, "Here!" Oh, he says, "No, that I wouldn't take. (Clears throat) All I want is forty-two hundred dollars a check, and a thousand dollars cash." Well I worked out a deal with him. He took the check, he gave me a check for the difference, and I cashed his check and I gave him that much money. All in that afternoon, I said, "Have you got a chauffeur?" He said, "Yes!" He called in a nice, young Irish fellow, he says, "Here it is." I says, "You wait until this car gets fixed up, and deliver it to my wife as a present."

And I went back to work. I said to him, "Buyer, now what else can you sell?" The result was he sold enough contracts to go-- accumulate sixty thousand dollars in cash, from different contracts. By that time I realized I must be wrong. If big mills, big factors, people in the

business, are ready to pay me cash for a piece of paper, because, to me, these contracts were of very little value -- they all had a stipulation that they can delay, or change, or cancel a contract for various different reason. And they could find a hundred reasons to cancel the contract. So why would they pay me cash? Well, I realized I must be all wrong. (Blows nose) So I decided I'm gonna stay in business. (Blows nose) [long pause]

People that are working for me, a designer came over crying. He says, "What am I gonna do, if you're not gonna buy anymore goods for this season? How am I gonna manufacture it?" I says, "I don't want to place any new contracts. I'll wait, and I'll stay with the - opportunities. If the goods will be higher, than I'll pay the higher price. But I don't want to place no more contracts." My cutter who was with me for years -- and I liked him very much, he liked me very much -- came in crying, "What am I gonna do?" I said, "Get another job." He says, "Yes, where else can you get a boss like yourself? I can't get as good of a job anywhere else." Well I says, "Go in business." He says, "Where am I going to get money?" I said, "I'll tell you what I will do"

Oh no, wait a minute. That's, I'm going ahead, I'm going far ahead of myself. (Long pause) Then I realized that I must be wrong, everybody else is paying me and everybody - (have enough of those, I got a pocketful). And I realized that I must be wrong, and I decided that I will stay in business, but I wouldn't buy any more goods. I wouldn't place no orders with anybody. Georgettes opened to \$3.75 a yard, woolens opened at four dollars a yard, other woolens opened at double their previous prices. I said, "I'll wait, and if it --- if I'll have to pay the high prices -- cross off the profit, all right -- I'll be able to." A half a dozen manufacturers were having lunch in one place, and I was a member of that - we had a special table for ourselves. If you had time to go to lunch, we were there, and if you didn't, we had to pay for the lunch and we had to pay the tip.

MARGO N: Where was it?

L. NASH: On Twenty-Eighty Street, between Broadway and Sixth Avenue. It was right across the street from my place of business. This was a set luncheon date, that every manufacturer had to pay every day whether he came or he didn't come. These manufacturers already stopped talking to me. "You're crazy, how can you be such a lunatic? The whole world is going one way, and you all of a sudden, you don't want to buy, you don't want to do anything, what are you going to do?" I said, "I'll wait, I just want to wait!" "Well," they said, "I'll tell you what you do. You place orders on goods, and we'll take it. We'll place the order with you, we'll tell you what we want." I said, "That's funny. I'll place orders for you, and you'll take it if the price goes up, but what's gonna happen if the price goes down?" He said, "We'll give you a deposit." And so out of the deposit I collected a hundred thousand dollars from manufacturers to place orders for them.

They told me exactly what they wanna order. I ordered exactly what they want, and I got cash security deposits from every one of them. That money I didn't put into business. I held it out. (Pause) And I realized

that, the whole world, I'm the only crazy one, so I started giving in, so I told my buyer, "Alright, buy, place orders for me too." By the time I decided he already couldn't place many orders, and I had to go plead with the manufacturers to take some of my orders. Some did, some didn't even wanna take, the Georgette man wouldn't take my order on any circumstances. The woolen man took some orders, other people who didn't know my deal, my meeting with the banks, they took orders. (Pause)

About the end of November, oh, maybe about the middle of November, the mill started delivering goods. These orders were placed to be delivered in February, not before next February. All of a sudden I start getting goods in November. I call in my piece goods man, I says, "Here what, what's all this? Where in the world did they get goods so fast to deliver instead of next February?" He said there, "I don't know, they must have it. What do you care, you are not going to pay the bill until next, next April, because you get twen-- sixty days from February! They're giving you the credit! So what do we care?" I says, "We have, we have no more room, we have no place where to put it!" Well, the credit man who was very smart, said, "Well, I think I'm gonna deliver it to the othe-to the customers. We have seven months to pay, and if you give them the same credit, surely they'll take it." And so he did.

All the people who had paid different deposits with me were good for credit because they all had made big money during the previous three years. I couldn't see anything wrong why we shouldn't deliver the goods to them. And so it was. The goods came in; it went straight to the prior man who had -- ordered it. I had no reason to think, that by February, the world was gonna go under. (Long pause) When I saw that I was getting goods delivered so fast, I said to him, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I still want to go out of business now. With all this excitement, I want to go out of business right now!" "Well," he says, "that's easy. I'll get an auctioneer who will take over your inventory, and pay you." I says, "Go ahead." He went down and called an auctioneer, the auctioneers came up, they went through the inventory, they made an agreement with me that all they want is ten percent from the sale of all the goods, and they want a five thousand dollar deposit from me in advance - five thousand in advance.

END TAPE THREE, SIDE A BEGIN TAPE THREE, SIDE B

L. NASH: They would auction off all the goods, and they would guarantee me the full price what had cost me --- which, it could still cost me less than what the new market price was. I agreed. They were supposed to come back the next day to start, to sign the contract and start measuring the goods and figuring out on it. They didn't show up. I asked my guy, "What happened?" He called them, they gave him a funny excuse. They were busy, next week. Next week came, I asked him again, "How about it?" He went down and talked to them. He came back with the story that one partner was sick, and they're delaying it. They can't do it now; they'll do it later. That never materialized. .

Goods kept on coming in fast, and I kept on shipping it out, and then goods came in on my orders, at the new prices. On February 1st, 1920, as the world took a complete change, the next morning - Oh! - On January

1st, I was away with my family in Lakewood (pause), and my buyer called me up. He said, "Heh!" he says, "You think you're so wonderful, you wanted to get out of business and everything else because there was a little slack, a little delay in trading?" He says, "I made you ten thousand dollars today, the first day after January 1st." I said, "That's good." And, I was in no hurry to go home. I went home maybe two or three days later, everything looked all right. It was already starting new business, looked like it was gonna make money again, and February 1st is just like the world has taken a change.

It stopped, and the commotion was that we have a crash-- everything is over. Well, it's like gossip. It doesn't look immediately like today with the oil shortages. There was supposed to be an excitement, that there was no more buying, no more trading. But, there was no, it didn't look like it was gonna go completely to hell. Between the first of December, when buyers come in to buy goods for January sales - with all this excitement, with all goods back being so high, they didn't want to pay the prices. They wanted to buy it for less, and we got very little January business. And so February 1st, 2nd, 5th, 10th, things looked bad, everything stopped. The buyers for ready -- for the spring season, wouldn't pay; like a dress that was selling for \$22.50 in November, they wanted to pay \$10.50 now. We just refused to buy. Well, nobody could afford to sell for \$10.50! Business went completely to hell.

It got so bad, that in April of 1920, a man came in and asked, "Have you got purple Georgette?" I called in the buyer and I asked him, "Have you got purple Georgette?" He said, "Yes, I want sixteen yards of purple Georgette." Georgette that was four, \$3.75 a yard, was forty-five cents a yard. He said, "I want sixteen yards." So my buyer went back and he found the remnants of twenty yards. He came back with the twenty yards and says, "Here, take the twenty yards." "Oy," he says, "no, I want sixteen yards, at forty-five cents a yard." Buyer came and asked me, "What am I gonna do?" I says, "Give him ---the hell, give him the twenty yards and take --- " He got mad and he cut off the four yards, and gave him the sixteen yards at forty-five cents a yard. And so everything else was just out. I called my bankers and I said, "Now, who was right six months ago?" I said, "But I'm, it looks like I'm gonna pay the bill."

One of the bankers who was a personal friend of mind said, "Well, call a meeting of creditors," I said, "No, I was educated wrong. That's not the way I was educated." When I was a little boy, my mother gave me a penny for -- to buy a soda. A little later, she saw I still had the penny. She asked me, "How come?" I said, "I had a soda, and I didn't pay." She took me by my ear, walked me for four blocks to the place where the sodas was being sold, pushed the people aside and said to the woman, "Take a good look at this boy. He just had a soda-- he didn't pay. Here's your penny, and remember when he comes again, that he better pay." She then turned me around, and took me on the side, hugged me tight, and cried all the way home.

When we got home, she put me on her lap, kissed me, and thanked me for going; for not--- for being obedient, and letting her pulling me by my ear all the way - and cried again, and pleaded with me to please forgive her for the way she treated me. She said, "But that's the only way I

know how to treat you to be- how to teach you to be honest." And I said, "This is the lesson, that I am not gonna call a meeting of creditors, but I will call you four bankers together. I have enough money now, to pay all the other creditors, but you. I may be able to have some money left to pay you too. If you are satisfied that I should pay all the creditors, and let you hang on. If I make enough money to eventually pay you, all right, and if not, then you are out of luck, you were the ones who put me in business. You forced me into it, and if I can't pay back, you will have to be the sufferers." Well, it seemed that they were cooperative, and they agreed. I sold out everything, paid all the creditors, paid him some money, was left only with a few dollars that I had - oh, that hundred dollars that I had taken in deposits, I also used up to pay some of the creditors.

(Long pause)

Well, for the moment, I got pretty well upset. I got so demented that I couldn't think of anything what to do. It was a hard shock to take, that here I was for three years, predicting every time I was - what I predicted came through. And all of a sudden I should let 'em lead me into a, that misery, and I was the biggest loser out of it. On top of it, my car was stolen. (Both laugh) Well, here we were. For the moment, I couldn't think of, I didn't want to go back into the cloak business anymore. I didn't know what to do. I finally figured out, I have a new business to go into. In my successful years I had opportunities, to lend people money. Some people paid me a bigger interest than the law was. But I knew that there were finance companies that were charging anywheres from thirty to fifty percent for credit for the average person. I figured out this is a good business to go into. But I had no money. I went to the bank where my reputation was good. And I said to the banker, "You put up two million dollars--" [Mic noise] "You put up two million dollars, let us start a finance business to lend money to the average person.

The president of the bank got up, walked over to me, picked me up from my chair, by the arm. He said, "You're crazy. Don't ever come in here with such crazy notions," he says, "the only people we lend money to --- they must deliver a financial statement with a record of years successful business. Where do you come in, we should lend money to whom, to what? What other people?" And these are the businesses today that the banks are sending out credit cards to people that they don't even know who they are. I didn't get discouraged that he threw me out. I went to my other three bankers, every one of 'em that knew me well. And I made 'em the same proposition; they all said it's crazy. They're not gonna go into anything like this. One Sunday, my brother reads in the Times, "Banker wants solicitor."

My brother knew that I was working on bankers, so he thought I may be interested in that. I was out of town at that time with my family. He answered by telegram in my name. When I came home and he told me about it, I said, "All right, we'll wait." A couple of days later, I got a letter from Bloomingdale's. I knew what business Bloomingdale's was doing besides the retail business, in banking. And I knew I wouldn't be interested in that business, that they were doing. But anyway, I was,

thought maybe I'll sell 'em the idea of lending money to the average public. I went there and I met the manager, and he told me the business that he was doing and what he wanted a manager for, a solicitor for. I said, "That business I'm not interested. But I would be interested if I can convince you, and put you into another business that I have an idea." Well he listened, and he said, "I'll take it up with my Board of Directors, tell it to them."

A few days later I got another letter-- I should come again. I came again; there were eight people, including Sam Bloomingdale, at that meeting. And I tried to explain to them what I -- business I want them to go into. They couldn't understand it, they couldn't see it. I said, "For heaven's sake, why can't you understand it? You are giving credit in your store, to the average person, you're giving credit to everybody, why wouldn't you see that and make a banking business?" "No, it, it's too confusing," and it, it didn't work. And at that moment, for no good reason that I can even tell, say today it happened, I said, "Would you like to go in the factoring business?" Sam Bloomingdale said, "Yes, that I would like." I said, "Alright, I'll put you in the factoring business."

MARGO N: Could you explain what the factoring business is?

L. NASH: [softly (oy, explain that)] "I'll put you in the factoring business." He said, "What do you know about the factoring business?" I says, "Nothing. But, if you agree, I'll have all the systems and methods how to go into the factoring business." He said, "All right, if you'll agree, go ahead." I said, "That business cannot be done in this store here. The business you are in, you can use in the store." They were lending money on a Accounts Receivable, None Notification. That business I didn't like. I said, "This business, you must have a loft downtown where all the other factors are." Factoring Business is: you lend money to middlemen who manufacturing piece goods, or other items. When they make a sale, they deliver the goods. And instead of waiting sixty, seventy days to collect, the banker (the factor) gives them the money right away. And the factor is responsible for the credit. That's factoring business. (Pause) Where do you want to wait?

MARGO N: (Laughs) Well, we don't have too much time left right now...

L. NASH: Well, I'm ready, I- (Both laugh). So, he said [pause] they said, "Alright, you can get a loft." [ph] L. F. Demmerich's credit man -- who was the man who gave me the first piece of goods, in credit, just for my looks -- became a very intimate friend of mine. We were very friendly, all these twenty years. So, I went straight from the meeting to see this credit man. And on the way I saw a loft on Ford Avenue that I thought would be good. I called up the man who was in charge of the real estate business in Bloomingdale's, and I told him to go and get this loft. I went to the credit man from [ph] L. F. Demmerich and I told him, "I am going to put Bloomingdale's into the factoring business, and I want you to help me. To give me all the information, what you have to know, and how you have to go about credit." He called in his - his secretary, and told us not to bother him. On--- he's going to be now in private session. And he spent the whole afternoon with me, went through every

part, gave me every piece of record of how to go into the factoring business. And I then got it.

MARGO N: (Laughs) Oh, it was very nice hearing this chapter in your life, thank you very much Mr. Nash...

L. NASH: You're welcome.

MARGO N: It was very nice hearing this chapter in your life. Thank you.

END SIDE B, TAPE THREE

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