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Mr. & Mrs. Harry Kety

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: This is a recording on the oral history program of the University of Delaware and we're interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kety. Mr. Kety, you were born in Russia. What is the year?

Mr. Kety: Born in Russia, April the 14, 1884.

Interviewer: 1884. What part of Russia was that?

Mr. Kety: *[inaudible] [0:00:19].*

Interviewer: That is near -- what large city is that?

Mr. Kety: That's near *[inaudible] [0:00:24].*

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Kety: The reason they call it *[inaudible] [0:00:29]* means a lot of churches around in the Jewish *[inaudible] [0:00:33].*

Interviewer: Oh, I see. What occupation was your father in?

Mr. Kety: A tailor.

Interviewer: He was a tailor.

Mr. Kety: When he came to America, he got a good job. But one man recommended him that knew him from the old country. He told them *[inaudible] [0:00:53]* space to make their own clothes. As a good man that was about women's clothes.

Interviewer: And this is how he...

Mr. Kety: And he worked up there. They have a big shop there, you know. He worked at the machine there. He used to make good money here.

Mrs. Kety: Oh, when he came here...

Interviewer: This is the *[inaudible] [0:01:13]* that you're talking about.

Mr. Kety: Yeah.

Interviewer: And he made men's suit.

Mr. Kety: No. Women's suit. Women's suits, waist -- cup brace. He was up bringing that one time that Laramie *[phonetic]* **[0:01:26]** had it made. One made it tailored for me when I'm in there that I've worn but I never came back.

Mrs. Kety: Yeah. But Harry, there they teach you *[inaudible]* **[0:01:34]** saw a little bit of a thing. But when you become a tailor from Newark, you really know every in and out of that.

Interviewer: You're a real tailor. Basically, why did your parents come over here?

Mr. Kety: Well, there was trouble over there, you see. And my father didn't want to see my oldest brother go and get into the army. So he gave a man some money and he brought us ashore. They stole him to *[inaudible]* **[0:02:04]**. They had to *[inaudible]* **[0:02:07]**. But there's a field until they got him into the place and then we got a boat and got to America.

Mrs. Kety: Across the border?

Mr. Kety: Yeah.

Interviewer: You were telling me a little while ago stories that you heard from your parents about the program in Russia.

Mr. Kety: Yeah. They use to -- you know what they use to do, ransack the house, rape the girls.

Mrs. Kety: Did it do it where you were, Harry?

Mr. Kety: Hey, in our time too. They use to come in and, you know, it was terrible. And my father is scared to death of them. My father had a violin and armed, so he wouldn't get *[inaudible]* **[0:02:50]**. And he was young. He had his arm fixed out, he couldn't straighten it out. But he *[inaudible]* **[0:02:59]** and they wouldn't take him in the army again with that.

Mrs. Kety: Of course a lot of men did that then.

Mr. Kety: A lot of Jewish used to do it, cut their femurs off so they wouldn't get in the army.

Mrs. Kety: Didn't your father ever tell you that?

Interviewer: No. No, he came over while he was -- he didn't know his father too well. His father died when he was 20 years old. When did you -- when were you born in Russia, Mrs. Kety.

Mrs. Kety: 1892, I think. It was 1892...

Mr. Kety: I don't know. I don't...

Mrs. Kety: I was 77 years old. I think it's 1892. Now I have...

Interviewer: Where were you born in Russia?

Mrs. Kety: In Russia near Kiev *[inaudible]* [0:03:46]. I was born in the little town.

Mr. Kety: That's all the small...

Interviewer: Around Kiev.

Mr. Kety: Around the there.

Interviewer: Your parents were in what occupation?

Mrs. Kety: My father used to grind the -- I guess, like you'd say cashew. The...

Mr. Kety: The grits. All kinds of grits.

Mrs. Kety: Grits, all kinds of grits.

Interviewer: You mean like wheat?

Mrs. Kety: *[inaudible]* [0:04:11]. Does your mother made hash?

Interviewer: No.

Mrs. Kety: No. Well, it's -- one day you order grits, or farina or cream of wheat, but it's a little heavier. And it's big with the Jewish people. They use it with soup, with gravy, with any [0:04:29] *[inaudible]* and that's what my father did before he came here.

Interviewer: And he just ground this. Is that it?

Mrs. Kety: Well, he had that -- I guess -- now, I don't remember exactly whether he brought it or grew it.

Interviewer: Grind it and sell it?

Mrs. Kety: Yeah, he sold it. That was his livelihood. Whether he grew it or bought it and ground it, that I can't tell you. But that was his occupation.

Interviewer: When you were in Russia, for how many years before you came to this country?

Mrs. Kety: I came here, I was almost 12 years old.

[0:05:00]

Interviewer: What memories do you have of...?

Mrs. Kety: Well, I have a lot of memories. I remember that the Jewish people associated by *[inaudible] [0:05:10]* in little town and there was only four Jewish families there. So the Jews and the *[inaudible] [0:05:20]*, it was really Russia was like *[inaudible] [0:05:25]*. See, their language, they talk Russian but it was different than, say, in Kiev or *[inaudible] [0:05:31]*. They used it better, like we would use the better English. And they have thorns and we lived among those people. I had an uncle that -- at that time my father was in the military. And I had an uncle that made bricks that men work for him. And we always have help in the house. Help was very cheap.

And I had an uncle that worked for a *[inaudible] [0:05:59]*. That would be like the DuPonts. He was an overseer, they had a lot of ground and that they employed a lot of people. So our associated with the grand was good. It was in a small village and we were one group.

Interviewer: You say your father was in this country before you came over.

Mrs. Kety: Yes. My father had...

Mr. Kety: That's why they need to come, you know.

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: No. You know why my father came. My father had a sister that was coming here and she was taking one child and leaving three children with us. That was Tanya Burenstien *[phonetic] [0:06:35]* Becky's mother. Her husband had been here for a while and she just took the oldest daughter and went. And the other children were too young so they send a ticket

for my father to bring the other children. And then when he was here four years before we came.

Interviewer: Why basically did your family leave Russia?

Mrs. Kety: Well, most people basically leave it because of the fear, the education. You...

Mr. Kety: If something like occurred here among the colored people, you know.

Mrs. Kety: You have no -- a Jewish person that have no -- now, I had a cousin, my mother's nephew that was a handsome guy. He was smart but they had private teachers for him. He wouldn't be able to be a doctor or a teacher or anything like that.

Interviewer: Otherwise, you couldn't go in...

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: That's right. So they had private teachers and see, we live on...

Mr. Kety: The colored people then...

Mrs. Kety: We lived on a farm and I guess now that I remember, it might have been socialistic inclined. He doesn't believe to go to war. He could play the violin and he had a good education and he didn't want...

Interviewer: Is this your brother or no?

Mrs. Kety: No, no. It's a cousin of mine. Cousin of mine. I was the oldest, my brother was the youngest. But this I remember that he didn't want to run away because his father would have a lot of trouble. So he promised his father he wouldn't run away. He was a handsome guy and his father took him some place to a doctor where they did something to his shoulder that when he moved on the shoulder would **[inaudible] [0:08:22]**.

And when he went to one place...

Mr. Kety: No way, just keeping the government.

Mrs. Kety: When he went to one place, and the man spoke up and said, "How many specimens of men do you have that we have in service that you can say that man is not with the girl. Of course, he was a healthy person, see. So then we went from town to town and I think that he...

Interviewer: Because they want to take him anyway.

Mrs. Kety: Well, they want different people. Different people examine them. Then once somebody said no, you went to different ones to give an opinion. I imagine that would be. And when he was finally taken, he never came home on a furlough. He never was on the street to salute somebody higher than him. He stayed in, for while he was in the office -- and they were -- that's why I see -- I figure that this time that more or less, it was socialistic inclined. He didn't want to serve the government. He didn't want to be a soldier, see.

So when he was in the office, and they were writing up somebody's paper or something. And the young man made a mistake and he corrected him. They wanted to know how he knew that. So actually, hard labor he never did because he was educated and he was in the office. But he never -- he did his duty but you have remain a certain length of the time, you're entitled to a furlough. He never took a furlough. He was never on the street.

[0:10:00]

But he vowed, when his cousin was going to go, he would see that he'd never served. He served three months and then you pull a ticket. When you serve three months, three years and eight months and then you serve the three years, you pull a ticket. And he pulled a ticket, it was white or blue, whatever color they have to have and he didn't have to serve the eight months. But when Pauline's brother Ben was accepted, he stole him out of the country. He never served.

Interviewer: Where did he get his education? You said...

Mrs. Kety: Private tutors.

Interviewer: Private tutors.

Mrs. Kety: Private tutors. We have a rabbi.

Mr. Kety: Oh, there are people that have a little money.

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: See, I was raised by an uncle, my mother's brother. And he had a business.

Interviewer: By the way, this cousin was something like a brother to you.

Mrs. Kety: Actually, we lived together. He was like a brother to me. That's why I know the people so well. In fact, not too many years ago, we were in New York to a Bar Mitzvah, Ben's Bar Mitzvah when his grandson was there. They lived down south in South America. And for many years, they came to South America and from there the grandson came to Brooklyn New York. I haven't seen them in all these years.

Interviewer: How about yourself? What kind of an education did you get in Russia?

Mrs. Kety: I had very little education, just Jewish. I was very little and I didn't have much education here either. We came here, things were bad and I was the oldest of the family. So my mother would have seen that I had an education because she had a chance to have an education. And then this uncle that the boy I'm telling you, my mother was an orphan when she was very young and he raised her and they had tutors and teachers in the house. So she had the same chance that his children had. But she turned it down or didn't want it or something but since things were bad, we came here 1904.

Things were bad that one of her sister-in-law decided that professors we won't be and that my brother should go to work and since my brother was two years younger than I was, she didn't feel it was fair that he should go to work and I should go to school. So neither on of us had but one year education.

Interviewer: You were talking a little while ago about the Pregrown *[phonetic]* **[0:12:43]**. What do you remember about them?

Mrs. Kety: I never saw anything. The only thing that I remembered at -- I'm not that *[inaudible]* **[0:12:50]** that lived in this little town that if weren't for this rich people, he have served the army. And he was married and when they were going to have Pregrown someplace, he would be the one to be called. And I remember that he...

Interviewer: To be called to do what?

Mrs. Kety: A recall to the army. He had children already. They were having this pregrown in another part of Russia, not where we were living. But he knew from now and I guess for being a soldier that he would be among the first to be called. And I remember when he went...

[Cross talk]

Mr. Kety: I dare say, Pergrown -- it was a massacre.

Interviewer: Why was he called?

Mrs. Kety: He would be called. He never was called because he...

Interviewer: Why did call him for a brigade, I mean.

Mrs. Kety: Well, he was in -- he served the government. He was a soldier. Why do they recall the people when they're on reserve? I imagine that the ones that had served would be the first ones to call because they were trained, they have the knowledge, and everything else. And he left Europe to America for that reason and left the family home.

Interviewer: So he wouldn't be called back?

Mrs. Kety: No. He wasn't called back.

Interviewer: But the Cossacks never entered your town. Were you...

Mrs. Kety: The Cossacks used to only come to -- for the *[inaudible] [0:14:11]*. But they used to come through. They had at their ground from the *[inaudible] [0:14:20]*. As I've said, we lived...

Interviewer: Did you -- do you ever see them?

Mrs. Kety: Oh yes. We lived in like the country, like a little village. And there was only three or four Jewish families and part of that family was three of us and the rest were all farmers. And I remember them coming with the -- I had...

Interviewer: So the other Jews were farmers?

Mrs. Kety: The other Jewish farmers?

Interviewer: Yeah, the Jewish families. They were farmers, you know.

Mrs. Kety: No, no. The farmers was only the Goyan *[phonetic] [0:14:50]*.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. Right. These were merchants...

Mrs. Kety: Different ones had different -- now, one of my uncles manufactured bricks -- laid bricks. The other uncle worked for those rich people.

[0:15:00]

The other uncle worked for those rich people. They had a sister and aunt that had a store. Then when she got married, she married a man that have children. And one of those children died and was never reported -- his death wasn't reported or a mix up or something.

And when they used to hear that the Cossacks, the governments were coming in town, anything they had, they had to hide because when they came they hid it all for that boy. Anything they have, they took. And anybody that was a balabush *[phonetic]* **[0:15:40]**, you know what a balabush is? A good living, Jewish people. They have sterling silver, they have coppered pots to cook and all that, even though they weren't rich, they had that. All that was hid when they heard those people will come for my aunt because anything they found of value, they took because they claimed, he was living; he wasn't dead. And I can remember that.

Interviewer: Do you remember your trip over here to this country?

Mrs. Kety: Yes. Very well. Now we didn't have to steal, the *[inaudible]* **[0:16:13]**.

Mr. Kety: Oh, we did.

Mrs. Kety: We went and brought down...

Mr. Kety: They carried it to me.

Mrs. Kety: They went in broad daylight. My father...

Interviewer: You have a passport?

Mrs. Kety: We have passport. My father sent us tickets and we walked across the border in daylight. But I remember that I had *[inaudible]* **[0:16:35]**. I got *[inaudible]* **[0:16:37]** when we started to come over and we stayed in Liverpool for a long time for fear they wouldn't let us on.

I remember a little man that came to my mother. We were four children and I was the oldest, came to my mother and said, "I'm going to take you." Or "Don't go on a boat until I tell you." And the reason for that is at the end, they were in a hurry. They can't take part of that ticket off. As you went in, you handed your passport, your ticket, whatever it was and

they would take part of that along. After a while, he said they get late and they'll just leave you on and you got a better chance to pass on account of the eyes than you go to begin with.

Interviewer: I see.

Mrs. Kety: So when we went on, my mother let me go first because you figure that they're going to let us off the *[inaudible]* **[0:17:30]** but actually, I just haven't start. Although it looked bad -- and since the idea was that was bad eyes, you couldn't get in to this country, we didn't have any way of knowing why someone -- one doctor squeezed it and said something, pushed me into the younger doctor and they said all right. And then...

Interviewer: Now where was this, when you went on the boat?

Mr. Kety: In Liverpool.

Mrs. Kety: We were on the boat in Liverpool and we came off in...

Interviewer: Liverpool? You don't mean England, do you?

Mrs. Kety: England. I tried...

Interviewer: I see. How did you get from Russia?

Mrs. Kety: That I don't know. We stopped at different places.

Interviewer: All right.

Mrs. Kety: We stopped at different places. Sometimes we stayed overnight, sometimes a little longer, sometimes we went by train. Sometimes we went...

Interviewer: Well, you had to go by boat to get to England.

Mrs. Kety: Well, whatever way we have to go. But that part of my trip, I remember. And then of course, they showed us the sailors. Showed a couple of us girls how to go down into the bank where they were doing cookout.

[Cross talk]

Interviewer: You were at steerage.

Mrs. Kety: We traveled steerage, but these two girls have not brought up the best things to eat for our family because we would help out the sailors. And then they -- I guess we didn't know fear that we should be afraid of the sailors. There was no fear even the mothers and there were so many Jewish people that went at that time that brought nothing but dry bread. They dried it for weeks and weeks because they were religious and they wouldn't eat anything. Practically, they got potatoes and herring but they didn't know what they would get so many *[inaudible]* **[0:19:13]**. I used to bring up and make them tea. And I was sick on the trip and we landed in Philadelphia.

Mr. Kety: Were you born on the other side or born in this country.

Interviewer: No. I was born here.

Mrs. Kety: He was born here. His father was a youngster when he came here.

Interviewer: My mother was born in this country again. Now, you ended in Philadelphia.

Mrs. Kety: That's right.

Interviewer: And you lived in Philadelphia for long?

Mrs. Kety: We lived in Philadelphia until 1924.

Interviewer: What did your father do when he was here? He couldn't grind...

Mrs. Kety: No. He didn't do that. He had -- I don't really remember. He had different jobs at different times. And then he had a store at one time, you know.

Interviewer: In Philadelphia.

Mrs. Kety: In Philadelphia. We lived all the time.

Interviewer: And how did you end up...?

[0:20:00]

Mrs. Kety: One time he worked where they made the liquor, a distillery, I guess. They would make out fruit. At one time he worked to sell it. One time he worked -- really where they made it. I mean at that time, I guess, he worked for Margolis *[phonetic]* **[0:20:19]** for years in Philadelphia -- the liquor.

Interviewer: And what did you do? You went to work when...

Mrs. Kety: I went to work. But see my mother was a sick woman. And my mother made up her mind that she will let me go to a shop to work. And I worked in stores so that I can hardly talk English. I worked in the department store all the time. And one of the department stores in Soundberge **[phonetic] [0:20:48]**.

One of the Gentile girls took a liking to me. She then -- she realized that I didn't understand between the Jews and Goyam. I didn't understand anything about Christ and **[inaudible] [0:21:04]**, in my house about Christ. And she took a liking to me and she told me the story. And then I was so young, they were old. I was a kid when I went to work and I was innocent. I didn't know and I couldn't talk very good. At that time Sanberge was a much better store than today.

Interviewer: Well, it doesn't exist anymore.

Mrs. Kety: No. But I mean the later years but at the beginning, it was a nice store. And they used to stand behind the counter and listen when I would talk.

Interviewer: Who would?

Mrs. Kety: These different sales people. And they would correct me but they never corrected me twice for one day. I was very anxious to learn how to work English and from there I was the one who **[inaudible] [0:21:51]** before I got married. And then the **[inaudible] [0:21:53]** have or something. They did not employ Jewish people. But somebody told me to go, they needed somebody and I went to the buyer and he was a very nice man, and I was there a couple of years before I got married. And that's how I learned.

Interviewer: And in the department store, you learned English.

Mrs. Kety: Yes. Well, I read -- and I had a very good teacher. I had one grade, the first grade and one half of the second grade. But my first grade teacher...

Interviewer: And this was in Philadelphia.

Mrs. Kety: This was all in Philadelphia. My first grade teacher have different articles and she would say this is a knife, this is a spoon, this is something else. If she wanted me to run an errand, she would take a small child that could talk Jewish and tell that child in English what she wanted me to do and I would go do it.

Also at that time in school, I guess that was for your time too, we use to have a cloakroom and the bigger children in the room would bring the clothes in and lay them on the table. And the children picked that club that didn't have lockers like they have *[inaudible]* **[0:23:09]**.

Interviewer: The pick-out was yours isn't it.

Mrs. Kety: That's right. And we have separate yards for the boys and separate...

Interviewer: Where in Philadelphia had you lived?

Mrs. Kety: I lived on 4th Street -- around 4th and *[inaudible]* **[0:23:21]** where there had been two little streets there. You know Philadelphia.

Interviewer: Not too well.

Mrs. Kety: Well, that was about...

Mr. Kety: Where all the streets in the...

Mrs. Kety: Leed Street, Worton Street, Federal Street -- you know all about -- it's downtown. Now at *[inaudible]* **[0:23:37]** it was a nice Jewish neighborhood but not today. Today, it's not nice at all.

Mr. Kety: Nothing but gangsters now.

Mrs. Kety: See, you lived around there too, didn't you?

Interviewer: Now, how long did you live in Philadelphia?

Mr. Kety: Well, I was 23 years old when I left there.

Interviewer: I see.

Mrs. Kety: What year did you come here, Harry?

Mr. Kety: Huh?

Mrs. Kety: What year did you come here?

Interviewer: Well, he was only three years old when you came here.

Mr. Kety: Two years.

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: What year did you come to...

[Cross talk]

Mr. Kety: Because a friend of mine lived here by the name of Dave Whittaker. And his wife, I knew her well. Before **[inaudible] [0:24:10]** she was crippled, you see. And she was in our gang. So Dave wanted me to come to Wilmington, him and I are going into business -- in the grocery business. So he came and saw me. I was working for the Acme Teacup there at that time.

Interviewer: This is in Philadelphia before you moved in to...

Mr. Kety: Yeah. And you know, a man, if he gets 12 hours a week -- it's those days. And we used to work hard, long hours. And so I came down here and I had a talk with Dave and we agreed that we go and partner in grocery business. We went **[inaudible] [0:24:50]** and deliver for lumber. A man with a name of Davis. We gave him for longer hair.

[0:25:00]

But he and I went in, I went back to the store and he had another little store squared away and he lived over there. But we'd work together, he'd come in.

So I saw he wasn't doing right. Whenever he goes to the market, he'd buy -- all right, he was supposed to pay cash. And at the end of the week, the commissioners would come in to give me a bill and I'd look at the bill, I would say, "We don't know **[inaudible] [0:25:36]**." So I went to Dave and I said, "Listen, Dave, the best thing for us to do is one week you go and one week I go." I wanted the job when I learned...

Interviewer: The buying.

Mr. Kety: ...the buying there. He may **[inaudible] [0:25:58]**, he says, "All right." So that week, I went. I buy what we needed. They needed -- anything, I put it on his name and I just tell him to take it over. So one day, he went the following week and I just said to him, "Dave, how is it that when I go, we spend so much money but you don't have any bills on Monday because I pay cash. Why do you do that? You send that to your wife and charge it to us?" He says, "Maybe I sent it over and I forgot or something like that."

I said, "No, Dave. You and I can't agree on that. So pay me out and I'll get it out."

Well I had 1,500 investment in there, so I **[inaudible] [0:26:58]**. We're calling three people, Jewish people. We called in O'Mally and Stein **[phonetic] [0:27:08]**. His own brother in law, Harry Eisman **[phonetic] [0:27:11]** and Mike Brown, who was a personal friend. I was a stranger to them. I said, "You tell them your story and I'll tell him mine." So he went and he told them and he says, "I guess we're better off. He doesn't trust me at all." But when I said -- I got up and told them what happened -- so when we quit, the three men says, "We'll be back soon." They went out and discuss the thing over and they told him -- they came back, he is to give me \$750.

He had a brother Barney Schwartz. He's a very rich man. He owned the Victoria's one time. He is the one who wanted to get in partners with Dave in that store. So he gave me his note with \$750. Now what could I do with \$750. So I went around and looking and find out -- found a little place at Sycamore and Van Bure. It was a Polish section. There's quite a few change house. American people. Took a chance.

So I **[inaudible] [0:28:29]**, she wanted \$500 stockpile and all. So she didn't add \$500. I was -- I figured, I got a place to start. So we opened up there and we were getting along nicely. But then the gentiles are moving away and the Polish families are coming. Well, I couldn't talk Polish. They'd come in and they want meat, so they tell it to me in Polish and I didn't know what they wanted. And when they use to buy, all these Polish people, they had four or five borders living at that place. So they buy each one and a half a pound of meat. She wouldn't buy up all things in one time. Each piece had to be separate.

Mrs. Kety: You're learning.

Mr. Kety: If it's **[inaudible] [0:29:20]**, they didn't want it and wouldn't tell you the difference. So had to be exact with them with the half a pound. So I was getting the stress of that, losing the **[inaudible] [0:29:33]**, an ounce and a half, a half an ounce or so. So I want to -- heard of the fellow by the name of Betty **[phonetic] [0:29:41] [inaudible] [0:29:45]**, one that is...

So I went over there and saw a pig. I asked him if he wanted to sell it, he says, "Yes, how much do you want?" He says, "Give me \$1,500 **[inaudible] [0:30:00]**."

[0:30:00]

We had a nice little stop there, you know. So he says, "Well, I'll let you know in a day or two." I said, "Keep it open for me." He says all right. Well, I didn't have \$1,500. So I went in to the bank, the center at that time. I *[inaudible] [0:30:21]* by deposit and I asked Mr. Robinson if he could advance me \$500. I'll pay him \$75 a month. I explained to him that I want to buy the place and my I'm short of funds. He says yes. So gave it to me and I came over there and signed up with Biggs. He moved away, I lived there and back *[inaudible] [0:30:49]*. The rent was \$25 a month for the store and a house. Today, you can get it there for \$150.

But I was doing pretty nice there. But the neighborhood was changing already. The children were growing and got -- I was telling myself, well I didn't want to raise kids down here. There's a lot of Italians. Very few colored people. They were nice though. And so, *[inaudible] [0:31:20]* and take a chance over the bridge. I came over and now, Harry Comb came after me.

He owned that place. He bought that place.

[Cross talk]

If he couldn't put his brother in law and two marquee in there because he was Americanized enough. He spoke French. His children spoke French. They couldn't talk English. The wife spoke English. He knew his brother and I will be all right for *[inaudible] [0:31:52]*. So we made a deal. I gave my store, he gave me a *[inaudible] [0:31:59]* and he gave me \$500 to boot. And I stayed there for a number of years.

Interviewer: What address was this now?

Mr. Kety: 2th and West. On the corner. I turned it into an apartment house actually.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. Kety: We were getting along there pretty good. And then all of a sudden, business is dropping, times are bad.

Interviewer: What year was this now?

Mrs. Kety: Oh, Harry, isn't that when you became a constable?

Mr. Kety: 1929, I became a cop. That must have been around the 18 or 1920. So when things are slowing down, I knew the head guy of the Republican

Party. Jim Ellison, he was a big shot then. *[inaudible]* [0:32:54] saw him. He knew that I was working around a district on Election Day. He said, "I'll let you know." So he went and saw a man by the name of Kirk Harold *[phonetic]* [0:33:07]. He used to lived there in *[inaudible]* [0:33:10] street.

He asked him, he said, "Well, that will be all right." He's a good boy." Well, he gave me a job as a constable. So my wife had to work in the store alone. I'd get up in the morning, go market and get everything ready for her. I bring the meats, vegetables and everything. By 8 o'clock, I resume. I used to get up at 5 o'clock and run those errands.

And she stood there with a boy and herself. The boy will take the orders out for her. Up until 19...

Interviewer: That was your first wife.

Mrs. Kety: Yeah.

Mr. Kety: So he -- I was working there in 1929 and then that year -- in 1930, the reelection to get reappointed -- see, I didn't know you had to go and fight for it.

Interviewer: And run.

Mr. Kety: Some of the men, Ray Pinian *[inaudible]* [0:34:11] used to be a barber. Lizzie Berger's father in law.

Mrs. Kety: Do you remember all these names? These are the newer people. I didn't know about the...

Mr. Kety: He was an old timer. So he -- I didn't apply. So that day, Abe and I used to work together at *[inaudible]* [0:34:33]. The squire hated it. I chose -- when I came back and I heard that...

Interviewer: The squire. Was he another magistrate or maybe...?

Mr. Kety: A magistrate. He was -- the old man...

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: He was the father of all the children that were here. There was a layer, there was a dentist.

Mr. Kety: Went to see *[inaudible]* [0:34:52] because of his father. A very brainy. The judges of the -- the high court had a highest respect for him.

[0:35:00]

Well educated and eager, you know. And they wanted to know all the definition of the different things and he used to explain to them. So he -- I came back, I said I wasn't reappointed. So I went back and saw Jim Ellison. I said, "Jim, I wasn't appointed again." He said, "You didn't have your application." I said, "I didn't know I had to." I said, "That's why *[inaudible]* [0:35:33]." He says all right, I have the other one.

Interviewer: What did you do as a constable?

Mr. Kety: What did we do? We put people outside. Take the furnace away.

Interviewer: You're an officer of the court then.

Mr. Kety: No. I've *[inaudible]* [0:35:51]. Never. I wasn't in court. I had the authority same as an officer. So I turned around and I knew Charlie Grant and he was Secretary of the State of Delaware at that time. I would took a trip down to Delaware and I saw Charlie and he knew me.

The day before I was there, he got some license for the *[inaudible]* [0:36:20]. Truckman asked me to put that. So when he saw me, he said, "What are you doing to your pay?" He said, "Are you working?" I said, "No. General Ellison gave me a reappointment." He says, "He did?" "All right, he said, "you go home. Don't you worry."

So he got me a job and he -- the unemployment *[inaudible]* [0:36:42]. So we used to sit there and we fill in card, fill them in. Whoever would apply for a job, we'd fill in the card. But I was used to that. I made more -- being a constable in a day and made there in a week, you know. Besides, *[inaudible]* [0:36:59] myself.

Interviewer: There wasn't any good show?

Mr. Kety: I didn't say anything. I thought I'd just take it out. One night I went up to the Young Men's Republic. As I was coming down, outside are Jim Ellison, Willie Garten and Hans Faulkner *[phonetic]* [0:37:17]. Staying and talking. So I came out and I said, "Hi, gentlemen, you kept all *[inaudible]* [0:37:25] to my car." He hollers over, "Hey, Kety I want to see you." So I come back and he says, "How about constablenesship?" I said, "The only way I'll take constablenesship, let me pick my own office. I don't want to be

shipped away to a *[inaudible]* **[0:37:44]** office." I didn't tell him that. I said I want to be free, to go where I want to. "All right," he says, and then I went home.

Next day, I was reappointed constable. Here, Ellison and Buck were loggerheads, fighting. The fellow that could have tried, a man by name of Kramer had charge *[inaudible]* **[0:38:09]**. I come around quick. He says, "Why?" I said, "Well, I get to make more money like *[inaudible]* **[0:38:18]**. I can't get anyone on this. We were getting \$1,800 a year. So I said, "I can't make no living on that." So he says, "Who are you with?" I said, "With the Republican Party." He says, "Do you know who's crowd control is it?" I said, "I know. Governor Buck and Charlie Grant." He said, "Well, go ahead.

So the next day I went up to Grothman and I asked him if I could locate there again, he said, "Sure." And I was there up until 1929, in that office. Grothman died during his term and then his son was appointed, Leslie. I was *[inaudible]* **[0:39:15]**. Joe Green was appointed after Leslie's term because Governor Bacon was like this with Joe Green. And I was working for Joe then. So Joe was a neophyte. I didn't care. I didn't bother me. I was doing my work.

So one night I came in there, wanted to see him. I worked for years on *[inaudible]* **[0:39:48]** like that with him. I want to see whether he's given me my -- requester to me. People come in and they'll pay, you see. Well we got permission to that.

[0:40:00]

I wanted to see. So I said one night -- still working nights. Nobody was there. People come in, I take the money and get my receipt and I start to go with the cards. And when I saw the names, where I've already get \$10, and \$15 and \$25 out of that, I didn't get a thing.

So I come in the next day and I said, "Joe, I guess I quit." He says, "Why?" "Because you might get to know what is due to me." He says, "My wife tells me daughter to do these things." "I don't know. I don't *[inaudible]* **[0:40:44]**." "Is that what she did?" This is why -- so tell her *[inaudible]* **[0:40:48]**. He wouldn't know. I said, "No. I'll quit."

So ended up quitting. I quit on a Tuesday and I came home and I told my wife that I quit. She says, "Thank god." It was a hard life to me it turned out. So she and I was supposed to go to Miami.

Interviewer: To live or vacation or what?

Mr. Kety: Huh?

Interviewer: To live or a vacation?

Mrs. Kety: Vacation.

Mr. Kety: So I got -- I had a girl living -- in the meantime, we had turned up leasing two apartments. Made four apartments and we lived in one. Had one extra room for our others and the other three, we rent. I had **[inaudible]** **[0:41:45]** living upstairs. Worked for the railroad. I tell her if she can get me two tickets, roundtrip tickets to go to Florida. She said, "When do you want to go. I said, "I want to go probably Wednesday."

That Saturday night, my son-in-law came down with his mother. She'd probably do what's in the family way at that time. She lives in Peak. She was living in Peak and...

Mrs. Kety: Pink, yeah.

Mr. Kety: So I look around and see nothing after a while. So Saturday night, we're getting ready to go to bed. So I would -- like the old lady, go to sleep with my wife. My daughter and her husband at our regular bedroom, and I was going to sleep on a sofa. So I'd mind they're in. My daughter comes in and says to me, "Dad, it was our job." "All right. What's the matter? Why are you asking about it? Talk this out." The mother doesn't feel well. So jumped up right then and here she had a stroke. So we couldn't get a doctor because it during war in 1945. And she -- we sent her to the hospital right away. The ambulance came and took her. We called the police station, the station sent the ambulance, send her over and finally, I got **[inaudible]** **[0:43:28]**.

He was there when I came back. He says, "If she pulls through, you'll be lucky." So we were hanging around. So when the nurse came and told, "Why don't you people go home and sleep." If only just **[inaudible]** **[0:43:46]**. That was around 2 o'clock. So we went home, we were sleeping -- we slept and couldn't sleep. After a while, the phone rings, "Come at once, she's taking the turn for the worse." By the time we got there, we hustled. We didn't take a half hour but from the time she called us until we got, she was quite dying.

Mrs. Kety: Was Sybrid down in New Orleans at that time?

Mr. Kety: Yeah. He was there -- no, he was in the service.

Mrs. Kety: Oh, and that of course, the time they raised four children.

Interviewer: Tell me something about your big as a constable before you left it?

Mr. Kety: For instance, you're a landlord. The tents are not paying you any rent. So you come to the magistrate court, you say I'd like take my money. These people are not paying rent. We should go and make them pay. So we make up a paper and he'd sign it. We go over there and get in.

[0:45:00]

Push our way in and we always manage to get in. And when you're in there, you tell her who you and what you're going to do. You let her in on the goods. And then you have good information to use it and not dead or moving. So we used to -- and then sometimes they'd skip away through the night. I didn't give a damn with the whole thing messed up.

Mrs. Kety: Of course she's not telling you. A lot of time he came to people he felt rather sorry. He didn't like the land but...

[Cross talk]

Mr. Kety: A lot of these colored homes we used to go in and there are cold days. The kids had no shoes or no stocking. The feet were black and blue. Go for **[inaudible] [0:45:47]**. I wouldn't do it. They'd have a fight then. So I've come to them and I talked. I said, "Listen, I can put you out of here in less than an hour. I can take your stuff away but jettisons what **[inaudible] [0:46:10]** something here. And I'm going to give you a break. But if you move out within a week's time, any day of the week, I won't bother you. You can the furniture and have the rent.

I don't know. They would skip, you know. They'd get away. A lot of them are stubborn and they would flee and we had to come and break the door. Once you make a levy, you have the right to break door after door to get in there.

Mrs. Kety: Your levy cost too, didn't you Harry?

Mr. Kety: Yeah.

Mrs. Kety: You levy costs too -- the machines. You've levied the machines too.

Mr. Kety: Oh, yes, yes. Take the machines away from the people are anonymous.

Mrs. Kety: And the people owed money for groceries or anything that...

[Cross talk]

Interviewer: You think all the system was fair? It was a good system?

Mr. Kety: Well, if people live in a house, they should pay rent and destroy the property. They not only don't pay the rent but they destroy the property, you see.

Interviewer: What did you do after you're a constable?

Mr. Kety: After I came back -- after I was constable?

Mrs. Kety: Excuse me.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Kety: Judge Fingert *[phonetic]* **[0:47:22]** got in touch with Judge Harry *[phonetic]* **[0:47:25]**. He told him that he's got a friend that she would like to give him in the court. Tom had just gotten in there, maybe a month before. So he turned around and he -- Tom, he says, "All right, I'll take care of him." He send for me, hired me and I would stay up until three years ago -- 19 years ago.

Mrs. Kety: Excuse me.

Interviewer: What time do you have?

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: *[inaudible]* **[0:47:58]** when your parents knew.

Interviewer: I'm interviewing Mr. Kidd.

Mrs. Kety: That's all right. I'm sorry. I'm sorry to interrupt. What did you do in the court? Now which court was this?

Mr. Kety: It's a municipal...

Interviewer: This is a municipal court?

Mr. Kety: Yeah, that's right.

[Cross talk]

Mr. Kety: And the judge heard me. As a probation officer and also a court officer. When the court had open -- I open the court, give me prayer, you know. I prayed, sat in the chair. After I was later promoted me. The truth is **[inaudible] [0:48:33]** right have to find, you know.

Interviewer: How many years did you work in municipal court now?

Mr. Kety: Nineteen year. Close to 20 years. I went off -- in fact when I went -- told Joe Dicardi that I'm going to quit, he says, "Harry, why, you don't have to quit. You can stay here as long as I'm here." I said no, because I don't want to get you in trouble. I was about 82 years old at that time.

Mrs. Kety: She was way passed this age to work.

Mr. Kety: That's right. No one to take me to Dave and look at 85. So "I say stuff to you, Harry. You're welcome to say, "I want to travel **[inaudible] [0:49:15]** for me. But I was afraid he can drop all over Macy.

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: They had a good Jewels name there and he was the only Jewish fan in there.

Mr. Kety: I would say on Tuesday.

Mrs. Kety: Then Florida, a lot of people.

Interviewer: But you were mainly, pretty much a clerk in the courts?

Mr. Kety: No. The clerk of the courts was Clarence.

Interviewer: Well, I know but that's an elected office. But your job was that of...

Mr. Kety: That an elected **[inaudible] [0:49:36]**. He was obviously -- he's isn't elected. His office was a boring private jet.

Interviewer: There is an elected office phone clerk at the court.

Mr. Kety: Absolutely upstaged.

Interviewer: Specifically, what things that you do with...

Mr. Kety: He may -- well, I was flattered that I was clear on probation. I've taken then my room and take a state in front of them.

[0:50:00]

What kind of work he works at, whether he goes to school you know it all depends on one. Ask them their different questions and then he'd have to report you as we leave and if you ought to find, we used to give him a chase to pay so much a week -- I mean in stone.

Well, I always take the money and end up the bad guy.

[Cross talk]

Mrs. Kety: You love so many of them, the neighbors' complain. When neighbors come plain, they couldn't get along. He would go after and see the reason and...

They have faced the dream.

Interviewer: You're pretty much a housewife through most of your life. After you got married, you want *[inaudible]* **[0:50:46]**.

Mrs. Kety: I got married and I -- of course, we had business in Philly and then when we came here, we had business.

Interviewer: What kind of business was your husband involved in?

Mrs. Kety: In Philadelphia, we had a produce store.

Interviewer: Produce.

Mrs. Kety: Yeah. And here we have a grocery store.

Interviewer: Either one of you could discuss this. Outside of your work in the court, what organizations have you belonged to? You belonged to, let's say...

Mr. Kety: Well, I can't remember but *[inaudible]* **[0:51:20]** was 50 years.

Mrs. Kety: Over 60, honey. You're the only man that they have.

[Cross talk]

The oldest living member.

Mr. Kety: Of course, I used to go onto *[inaudible] [0:51:33]*.

Interviewer: Were you very active in politics then?

Mr. Kety: I used to.

Interviewer: *[inaudible] [0:51:44]*. What were you in politics? They were your commitment.

Mr. Kety: No, I wasn't in a commitment but I would after those follow us *[inaudible] [0:51:53]* comment about it. I knew John Smith was home and I knew he was a Republican like me.

Interviewer: Would you work for the community or did you work for...

Mr. Kety: *[inaudible] [0:52:01]*. Mr. Rathpaw is a community Methodist district.

Mrs. Kety: She is a tremendous girl.

Mr. Kety: Yeah, she's a committee woman.

Mrs. Kety: My husband is in the legislature.

Mr. Kety: There was a lot of work attached to politics.

Interviewer: Were you member of all these colors? Your...

Mr. Kety: Members are the best *[inaudible] [0:52:21]*.

Mrs. Kety: But one true member the out Scottish a long time before.

Mr. Kety: Or I was a member of the Baptist before the -- this is an insistent. Every Jew that came in town.

Mrs. Kety: Well, that was the only shoe at that time. That was the only synagogue with the exception of the Temple of Truth.

[Cross talk]

They split it up, see. Then Cub, get out.

Interviewer: You're talking about *[inaudible]* [0:52:47].

Mr. Kety: Huh?

Interviewer: You're talking about Anna's coming here?

Mrs. Kety: At that time.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Kety: The Hershel Amos from the Ascoviz *[inaudible]* [0:52:54]. People, they didn't want to stay there. They want to have their own synagogue. So Drykin and a bunch of others got together and they resigned from the Ad Scottish *[phonetic]* [0:53:05]. And they went over to...

Mrs. Kety: December. It was sure are.

Interviewer: Not very shallow.

Mr. Kety: Now, you have shell Amish.

Mrs. Kety: That's one of them.

Mr. Kety: And then why Judge Finger is the originator of the...

[Cross talk]

Pipers his true life and I haven't got another man to do what he'd done to hurt.

Mrs. Kety: And you'll never get another one.

[Cross talk]

Unidentified speaker: Did you look at the pressure last...

Mrs. Kety: He looks just like.

Mrs. Kety: You can see Sam, when we lay we up, she was Sam's mother. You can see some more but your father was very ready lay up, right? He was ready to lay up but yet, around the eyes, you're seeing a lot of them.

Unidentified

speaker: Well, my sister had card with your money fro years.

Interviewer: Let me ask you one final question and we won't bother you anymore. What changes have you seen in Wilmington for these years you've lived in Wilmington?

Mr. Kety: What changes and all?

Interviewer: What changes do you like and changes...

Mr. Kety: Well, the changes -- the things in town has changed. All the old people that were in business down there are gone. There's hardly any of the old people who lived in it.

Mrs. Kety: Well, I think the change is for the better.

Mr. Kety: I don't know.

Unidentified speaker: Dad's right. Even in my town, I see terrible change. I mean...

Mrs. Kety: You mean for worse?

Unidentified speaker: Well, there's not the closeness among the Jewish people.

Mrs. Kety: No. Well, that couldn't...

[Cross talk]

Unidentified speaker: Even in my time, I can see where the change is coming.

Mrs. Kety: Sarah, you couldn't see a closeness and people like you had years ago. There are too may people.

[Cross talk]

Everybody when we're going back, when her father came...

[Cross talk]

Mr. Kety: When I walked down Market Street or any street, I see like everybody. Today, I walked up and I'm by himself.

Mr. Kety: Today, the dead people, young people, come up and talk to them. They know Amy, don't know where they belong but they are children from people that he knew. Well, he didn't change like the children then. That's how they know.

Unidentified speaker: It's hard. It is a lot changes.

Interviewer: What other changes have you noticed when you signed the -- getting larger, the Jewish community in town.

Mr. Kety: Of course as the store as I put up more up to date today than they ever was. Beyond the surf, you people are in markets. So we could move out. Marcus Street would be dead.

Mrs. Kety: He's got nothing to do with you people on wanted...

Unidentified speaker: These guys *[inaudible]* [0:55:46].

Mrs. Kety: Those parents are out and he never liked it.

[0:55:51] **End of Audio**