



Citation for this collection:

MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Leon Hnida
14 Specie Road
High Point
Wilmington, Del.

Interviewed by
Elaine R. Wells
June, 1969

Transcribed by
Irene H. Long
August, 1969

I'd like to introduce my grandfather, Mr. Leen
Hnida. Gege, where were you born?

Russia.

Where in Russia?

A...Valensk, Guverna.

Valensk?

Valensk, Guverna state.

(MRS. H.) (Low conversation in Russian in background.)

(EL.) Yes, is that.....near what big city would that be?

(MR. H.) Staro Konstantino

What's wha.....

Star - o Ken - stan - tino.

Is there a city in Russia called that today?

Cit....yeh, city in Russia, yeh.

It's still the same. (Tape turned off) What village
and city were you born in?

This is large village of five-hundred numbers, a,
large numbers.

Five-hundred people?

Five-hundred numbers.

(MRS. H.) Number, home.

(MR. H.) Homes.

Oh, five-hundred homes, I see.

That's right.

Bout how big of an area was this, wha....couple
acres or.....

Just like New Castle.

Like New Castle?

That's right.

The city or the county on New Castle?

No, it's a city, village, city-----.

Did a, did every person in this family in this village have their own home? Did they have their own farm?

Yeh, pretty near everybody have their own homes, farms, a land.

Did you have many relatives in this village or were you the only family?

(MRS. H.) (Conversation in Russian)

(MR. H.) We have a, I have a, but now I don't know how many I have. Maybe, I have three two brothers.

Two brothers.

And three sisters.

And three sisters.

Yeh, and father and mother after all, but now.....
nobody ----- all is dead.

What did your family do for a living?

Well, they used to do all most on the farm.

Did you have your, your own farm and.....

We have our own la...farm, yeh.

Did you produce just to feed your family or to sell?

Sell some.

You sold some?

Yeh.

Did you have livestock?

(DAU.) Pigs?

(EL.) Pigs or a....

Yeh, a, they have pigs, sheeps.

And sheep, too?

Sheeps, we got about one-hundred sheeps. Couple cows.

Cows, too?

Four horses.

Horses? A, what did, did your parents do farming
all their lives, too?

Yeh.

The same.....

Pretty near everybody do that on a farm/

How big was your farm. How big were the a... the co....
most of the farms? What did they run in size?

Well, see, that, that, that a state, that state they
have a. ...land, not, not the exactly in one place.

Uh huh.

But the four, four, four parts.

Four parts?

Yeh.

What do you mean?

That's about....one part you get two acre, three, four
acre.

Oh, I see.

Another part two, four acres, see?

I see, right.

See?

Uh, did you go to school at all? Did they have any
schooling in the village?

They have, they have village school, yes.

Was this like a one room school?

Yeh.

Type of thing?

It's like school, one room school.

How high did the grades go?

But right, right next to church.

Right next to the church?

Cross the street from the church.

Was it a church school? Did you have a.....

That's a priest always come a, a, you know, check it every day.

Oh, really?

Every morning, every morning.

Did everyone have to go to school?

Did - you? You kidding? You have to go. Everybody have to go and.....

They had to go? And the priest would come and check on them?

Yeh, sure, everyone.

Did you have to learn any a....

We had a teacher...a man...a...man, man, not woman.

A man teacher?

Yeh.

Oh.

Mr. Peole.

Mr. Peole?

(MRS. H.) No.

(EL.) Mr. Peole?

(MR. H.) That's right.

Mr. Peole. How about that.

That's right. That's his name.

Did he have his education....

That's his name O.K.

From a, a some place in Russia?

No, he's come from the city of Konstantire.

Oh, the big city there.

He's, he's not a -----.

Uh huh.

Professor, you know, he's supposed to be.

Did you learn all different subjects, a.....

We have like a numbers, second class, but I'm not finished second class.

How far did you go?

First ----, not half that. (chuckles) That's all, just a half, that's all.

Just a half?

That's all.

Uh, what, would you say the American school at that, that time would be about the same as what your school was?

So much difference.

A lot of difference?

It's hardest here because, you know, they teach you more a.....

Oh, I....

I have eighteen months.

Eighteen months?

Number Fourteen School when....

Oh, Eigh....., uh huh.

There's three months in the Post Office.

Uh huh.

See.

(MRS. H.) For his naturalization papers.

Oh, I see.

See.

If, if.....

(MR. & MRS. HNIDA hold conversation in Russian)

(EL.) What?

They're asking me what I, what I want to go to school for.

What did you go to school for when you came here?

Course I try to get my citizen paper.

Oh, I see. You mean after you came to the United States you had....

I had to learn the Constitution.

The Constitution.

I read and write.

To read and write.

That's right.

Did, did you learn how to read any a English or to write any English or say anything before you came to the United States?

I have a, I have some, I could not many, but I could ask what I wanted.

You could ask questions?

But I can't speak very good.

Uh huh.

I just ask to, to give me to eat, a...a... go come back. That's all, few words.

Uh huh.

But I don't know much. I work, learn Odessa.

In Odessa you learned?

That's right. Oh, I, IOdessa all kind nationality there.

Oh, I see.

I work year and a half work there.

Probably because it was a seaport.

Yeh, they.....

And people coming into that area.

Just like New York, see? Just like a New York.

Did he, in this village if a boy decided that he didn't want a to remain as a farmer, a do you think there was any chance that he could do something different? Suppose....

Yeh, you could go to high school, you could go to college. You didn't have to pay much the college there.

You didn't have to pay much for that?

No, not many.

Did you have, um, did you have to have a special, um, type of paper from your, um, teacher at this school or did you pass an examination or....

Yes, we, we if you pass examination they send a you Zetemil, next city.

Oh.

To the high school.

Uh huh.

Next school you have to go away because we ne have no high school in our village.

In just your village you had just the grade school?

Yeh, regular, regular grade school, that's right.

How far away was the high school?

Oh, maybe like a....I'd say about thirty five miles.

And the children, um, they would have to travel?

You, you have to live there.

Oh.

You can't go every day.

I see. Diduh your village....

Same like Newark.

Right, in your village, did you have your own carpenters and your own blacksmith?

Everybody understand everything.

Everybody was altogether.

We had two blacksmiths to the city.

Two in the city?

Yeh, carpenters, pretty near everyone understand something. My father was a carpenter.

And so you really didn't....

My brother, my eldest brother was carpenter.

Oh, I see.

Sure.

Um....

(MR.&MRS. HNIDA hold conversation in Russian)

(MR. H.) My father was " -----"

How do you say what?

Make a the, make a the.....

(DAU.) Cloth

(EL.) Tailor?

(ALL) No, no, no.

(EL.) He weaved cloth?

(DAU.) Yes.

(EL.) Who was the weaver?

(DAU.) Weaver. His father.

(EL.) Your father was a weaver?

Yeh, that's right.

Oh, I see. Did he have like his own business in a... the

village?

That's right. He had a....machine.

(DAU.) Loom.

(EL.) Oh, a loom.

(MR. H.) Work, we have loom, yeh, yeh.

(EL.) The loom that he, he weaved....

(MR. H.) That's right.

Fibers back and forth?

That's right.

I see. Um, you were telling me before that a the priest was in charge a, would come to check on the school and everything?

Every day.

Religion was really important?

Very, important, very, very, very, very important.

Then did you have - what were - was there a strict Sunday attendance to church?

Everybody believe strictly you had to go to church on every Sunday...a...case if you're sick, you don't go, yes. But if you feel well, you, you'd have to go to church.

If a the church was this important in your lives, did a you go at all, did you have time at all to go during the week?

A, were there services during the week?

Yes, sometime during the week we have the holidays and we have to go....to church.

I've often heard that a the way they called to church was bya...loud and long peeling of the - church bells would ring and this announced.....

Church bells - we have five bells?

Five bells?

Of the church, yes.

In your church?

That's right.

And you would a know when to come?

Yeh, yeh.

When church was starting because of those?

And starting church and the ----- Same like here.

Right, uh huh. The, the

(DAU.) The creed.

Was when you said the creed?

(DAU.) Yes.

(MR. H.) That's right.

(EL.) To the church? And a about how long were your church services? Were they.....

Bout, a...bout an hour and a quarter.

About an hour and a quarter?

Sometimes an hour and a half, long service, a holiday.

Not....

You know, holiday was long service than weekday, you know.

Uh huh.

Like a regular, what would happen a, you had just a regular a....

"Pasha," you know.

(DAU.) Or Easter.

(MR. H.) Easter.

(EL.) Easter, what, what do you mean they'd be lenger at Easter?

Cause a midnight service.

I.....

Procession all around the church.

Did all, did all the people from these five-hundred homes use this one church?

Yes.

It was the same religion?

There was too many people, don't worry.

Right, and a, all the villages that were right around a your home town, and they all have the same religion too?

A, a, everybody that time.

Everybody at this time?

Every place you goes.

Any place? They all had....

Not yet. No difference...

The Russian Orthodox Religion?

We have couple, we have couple blacksmith and one carpenter, they don't have no Catholic church.

Uh huh.

Then they didn't go to Russian church.

But there were Catholics there too?

They have couple families, that's all.

Were there any other, other type of nationality?

No, no just a Cath, Catholics.

No, just a Catholics.

Polish.

And the Polish?

That's all.

Uh, at this time did the government a, did they make, did they, was the government for religion or were - they weren't?

Yes, yes, the Czar was deep religion man.

Very deep religious man?

The Czar, government, they built so many churches
in a Europe.

The government built a built these churches?

Government, governmental help, yes it is.

That's probably why they're so beautiful.

Oh, the Czar was deep religious man, yes sir.

They have so much money to build them.

Even a, the Moscow they got a sixteen hundred churches
in one city.

Sixteen hundred churches in just a, in Moscow alone?

Moscow yes, sixteen hundred churches. And a big
churches, too.

Uh huh.

Not a small.

The, the big ones with the a domes on the top?

That's right.

The onion tower domes.

Yeh, yeh, yeh, big churches, yeh.

Maybe we should say something about just some of the
different a, a customs they had in the church like a the holy pic-
tures that - didn't you, they're called a certain special name.

What do you call them?

(DAU.) Icons.

(EL.) The a holy pictures.

(MRS. H.) "Ikon," "ikon."

(MR. H.) Oh, icons, the "ikona."

(EL.) "Ikona?"

Yes, same like have here, "ikona," icons, yeh.

And these are the holy pictures?

Yes.

And a....

Same kind like here.

Right.

No difference.

Uh huh.

We have same like here.

A....

The church, the church designed all: tower, every-
thing. Just like this country

Just like it is in this country?

Same thing exactly.

Just like.

All one church. There's big church, you know.

Just like St. Michael's on Clayment Street, the same?

Same, same design, yes.

Same type of thing. Was a, when, when the priest
had his schooling, did he go to a monastery or did he go to college
first or did he just take a.....

Yeh, he goes, before he gets priest.

Right, suppose....

He go, he go to school. He go to seminary.

And then he went to seminary.

Sure.

Just like here.

You know where seminary in Europe, Keshenou, big city.
Big city, Keshenou.

Keshenou?

That's right.

Where was this? Does this - north, south?

That's a, that's a

(DAU.) The next, next county.

(EL.) In the next county frem, over?

(MRS. H.) South or north?

(MR. H.) It's in the north.

(EL.) In the north. Let's talk a little bit about the way that you lived over there. Suppose you all wanted to get together fer, to have some fun or to do things together. Um, you did, you didn't have.....

You mean, you mean like summer time in the village?

Right, um.....

Well, we have, we get together, we have a...a... a home made orchestra, you know like

Home made orchestra?

Yeh, a, violins and -----.

And you play the violin?

Then we have good time, you know, we have a ice tea.

Uh huh. Ice tea?

We drink no coffee, just the tea.

No coffee at all?

No coffee there.

Just tea?

Just tea.

Huh!

Tea, they, the young generation I'm talking about.

Uh huh.

Then we dance in the yard - not, not in the house.

Uh huh.

In the yard, play, dance.

Uh huh.

We got benches.

Uh huh. Did the church a have a big influence on the get-togethers. I mean did they have like church get-togethers or was it away from the church mainly?

I mean a like a..... what you mean a party or something like that?

Right, in other words like now we go for a church supper and, and dance.

No.

But then the church didn't have this type?

We no have that time. Just have the ----- church, that's all.

Uh huh, uh huh. Um....

But we have parade.

Parade?

We have like, like procession, you know, like church procession.

Uh huh.

Well, it's procession, right?

Right.

We go - whole village walk and all this a crosses, candles.

People carrying crosses and candles.

Everybody walking: priest, choir sing, whole village on streets.

What time of year was this?

That's a the "Prevodna," next, next to the week from Easter.

A week from Easter?

"Provedna."

(DAU.)

After Easter.

(EL.) Week after Easter?

(MR. H.) After Easter, yeh.

And the whole village would take part in this?

Whoooooole village go.

I bet it was pretty.

And don't forget - flag first, the Russian flag.

The Russian flag went first?

Yeh.

And the, the Czar picture.

The Czar's picture?

Had to be. Oh, yeh.

All the time?

Got to be!

And then the people?

In every village house they have the Czar's picture.

Don't forget.

Every house in the village?

Every house.

You saw his picture?

Picture of the Czar, Nicholai Nicholas.

Uh huh.

Every, if you walk in the house and you no take a cap off, they could have you arrested.

For not taking your cap off?

That's right.

In front of the Czar's picture?

That's right.

(DAU.) Showing respect.

It, they was strict there. I'm telling you that. They was strict but a quiet. They was nice in Europe. No trouble this

There wasn't in Russia.

This was the quiet time though, wasn't it?

Yes, there was Depression. They, they no have much money. They no make much money.

Uh huh.

You have to work maybe fifty cents a day.

Fifty cents a day?

That's all you could make it.

Boy. Well, when you a most of the people if a you could only make fifty cents a day, did they a have trouble getting food to eat er.....

No, couldn't have because we have all the....we, we raise everything.

Right the f....your own farms supplied you.

Everything.

Food.

Chicken, we have meat; we raise a couple pigs, you know, lambs.

Uh huh.

You kill them, you have meat.

Uh, you hear a lot in the United States about the a, the black bread that you, that you would eat.

I mean a, a rye bread?

The rye bread, right.

We all eat a rye bread in Europe.

All the time.

Black salt tee.

You never had the, the white?

My, my mother used to bake once a week - twelve leave bread.

Five loaves of bread?

Twelve rye.

Twelve loaves of bread.

Because we have a pretty good size family.

Uh huh.

Brown bread, you know what I mean.

Right, in a.....

Like pumpernickel, you know.

Right, uh huh, pumpernickel.

Yeh, but they're good too.

Uh huh

(MRS. H.) Like that bread...

(MR. H.) Very nice.

(EL.) If you had a ever, if you had stayed in Russia, what do you think you would have done eventually? Just a, you know - what do you th...would you have stayed - if you hadn't thought of coming over to a America would you probably have been a farmer?

Well, you, you, you have to work on the farm but I don't feel like working on the farm but try get something else.

You didn't like to work on the farm?

I did little, little diggin', diggin' every, every year and go little bit higher, see?

Uh huh. Well, when was the first time that you thought that you really wouldn't become a farmer and you'd do something else and what did you do then?

Well...I'll tell you. I don't care much for - too hard work on the farm. (Laughs) I try to get, get better job - more money, see.

(DAU.) How old were you?

(MR. H.) Huh?

(D.&EL.) How old were you?
How old when I left a home?
Yes.
Fifteen years old.
And where did you go?
I go first a, first a, I go...a... Bessarabia.
And where was that? How far from your village?

(DAU.) Bessarabia.
That's a, that's a pretty close to Rumania.
To Rumania?
Pretty close to Rumania.
Uh huh. Did you have....
From there I work on the farm. I think it was....couple
years. I go to Odessa.
And then you went to Odessa?
When I go Odessa, I get up(?).
Did you have any idea that, that you would be leaving
Russia at this time? What were you working towards it?
I like, I love, I never forget Russia.

(DAU.) I mean, did you know when you were working on this
farm, when you were working in Odessa that you some day would go
to America?
I think but I, I.....have no idea exactly, but I go
back home last. I see man was from the Europe, I mean from a this
country.
A man had come to your village from a America?

(DAU.) United States.

(MR. H.) Yeh, he come, he come from America. How he dress!
I talk myself, "I got to go!"

(ALL) (Laughter)

You had to go to America?

Yeh, that's right.

He was dressed pretty nice.

Then I get passport. First I got passport.

How did you get your passport? Did you have to.....

Well, my constable was friend of mine. He, he, he
get for me. It cost me eighteen rubles.

Eighteen rubles to get a passport?

Yeh, that time, that time.

In that time. Do you know how much that would be in
American money?

Oh, a, eighteen rubles. That's a a that's a nine dol-
lars.

Nine dollars to get a passport. Did you have to have
a birth certificate to get the passport?

From the, from the church you had to have them, yeh,
yeh.

From the church you had them?

Because you can't get no passport if you don't have
birth certificate.

Oh, you couldn't get a passport?

You had to go first to the priest.

Right.

He'd give you a birth certificate copy. Then you have
to go a....like to the squire.

Uh huh.

And then take a pledge.

Uh huh.

It's true. Then a stamp issues what you call a passport.

Uh, I, I....you said that you had to go to the priest

to get the pass...uh...to get the birth certificate. That just shows how a.....

Yeh, copy, copy they give you copy.

Shows how the church had a a real good hold on everything that the.....

Church get everything. Priest get everything in his hand.

Everything important the priest, the church had.

When anything happened in village, trouble. When he come, when he come constable or the somebody, investigation. They go see priest first.

Rather than to the.....

He got all record, every, everyone person in the book.

(MRS. H.) If he's good or bad.

(MR. H.) The church

The church was like our F.B.I. today.

Are you kidding?

(ALL) (Laughter)

(MR.H.) Well, I like that way because that..it's very, very good.

Uh huh.

I tell you. Everybody believe religion, you know. They believe the church. That's exactly why it's nice and quiet that time.

Uh huh.

They no - I den't see no....youngs and wild like a, like a now.

Uh huh, yeh.

They was pretty quiet.

Now my...a...were, was there anybody else in....that...

um, how, how old were you when you get your passport to come?

I was a.....

(MRS. H.) Twenty.

Not quite twenty.

Not quite twenty?

No.

Were there any other people?

Well, you see a....twenty, I was in December try
this passport.

Uh huh.

Last December when a January come, I was to a.....
I was a March the twenty.

Uh huh.

Third of March I was twenty years old.

The third of March you became twenty.

Yeh.

And you get your passport.

Yeh, but I get ready first.

Right.

January, February, you knew.

Uh huh.

I live home that time couple months.

Uh huh.

Before I left.

Right.

When I left Europe I have passport. I have ...a...
ship's card.

Passport, ships card? What's a.....

Then I, then I.....

What's a ship's card?

(DAU) Ticket.
Ticket, ship ticket.
Oh, the ticket, I see.
Then I get, I go down Libau I no go ever to
Germany, you know. I go this way.

You didn't go through Germany, you went....

Oh no,

Libau.... What, that was down towards.....

(MRS. H.) Russian port.

That's Russian port.

A Russian port?

It was a Latvian port, but still Russian.

Uh huh.

And, and ship was Russian Kursk the name, ship.

Kursk?

Kursk, ship.

Was the name of the ship?

Yeh, it's real.

And it was a, it was a Russian ship?

That's a real Russian.. I know it.

Uh huh.

It was. Then I, I arrived. Then I arrived fourteen
days.

Fourteen days?

The step first step....a....a....

(MR.&MRS. H.- Russian conversation)

(Mr. H.) Co....ce....England....a....Liverpool.

Liverpool?

The step.

Oh, it went around there first?

Just to a take a....a...

Passengers on?

Passengers on ship. We didn't stay long. From there we go to Canada.

To Canada first?

A....what's the name of the....

(DAU.&MRS.H.) Halifax?

(EL.) Halifax?

Yeh, from Canada come to New York.

Oh, you had a long trip then?

It was fourteen days.

Fourteen days and you made those two steps?

When we come to New York, we, we a checking everyone to the doctor.

Everyone went through the doctor?

They make a cross the back - chalk. If you had to go to right, left, something wrong.

They just put a big "X" chalk on your back?

That's right. If you cough.....

If anything was wrong. Uh...in....

Change, change your money.

Uh huh.

Change your money. They give you lunch - piece salomi and cheese. (chuckles)

A piece of salomi and cheese for your lunch?

And piece of bread.

And a piece of bread. Not a very big lunch.

They give, they give you big tag where you go at.

They put a si...tag on you?

Yeh, which which you go because, because you have to

know how much longer you have to take train.

Right, uh huh.

Anyhow was Constantine (?) was Constantine, right?

Well, we go right to Philadelphia, Spring Garden.

Uh, when you uh started to come from uh your village was - were there any other people with you that came or were you the only one?

Uh, uh, I just by myself.

You were the only one. Did you know anyone in the United States at this time?

Yeh, ----vitch, Jewish peep.....family, Rabbi!

A Jewish family from your village?

Rabbi, rabbi, name Lubavitch(?).

Had gone over to the United States before?

They was three years already here down on Marshall Green.

Oh, they were three years.

(DAU&MRS.H.) Philadelphia.

(MR. H.) That's where, that's where I come, Marshall Green.
I see.

(DAU&MRS.H.) They were already here.

(MR. H.) -----

Uh huh. Did uh, when, when you went over, did you think at all that you would ever come back er.....

I take a....begin I think I come back.

You thought that you would come back.

But when it started that, that trouble, that, that revelution, you know.

The 1917?

(DAU.) The war, war, war, no.

The war started in....

World War One.

(MR. H.) Then the - I tried but not allowed to go back.
You weren't allowed then to go back after that?

No, I, I decided to stay here, that's all.

Uh huh. Uh, when, when, you were coming over on the
boat and everything, were a were there a lot of emigrants on the
boat with you?

All, all kind.

All kinds, I mean like.....

All kind nationality.

What kind of nationalities were coming?

Oh, mostly Jewish people.

A lot of Jewish people?

Yeh, lot of Jewish people.

Jewish people and then Russians and a....."Jrushins."

Russians.....a..... "Jrushins," you knew some, you know.

(MRS. H.) Georgians.

Georgians. Oh, a Georgian Russians.

All, all, all mostly Jewish, I don't.....

Mostly Jewish?

More Jewish.

Well, what your accommedations like? A wha...did you
have nice places to stay or a.....

(DAU.) On the ship.

Where a.....

On the ship.

On the ship not much good.

Not good?

No.

Why? Why was a...

No, because below I get seasick couple days.

Did you have a, did you share a bunk like room or a.....

Yeh, yeh, yeh.

How many people were in a room?

In the room?

Uh huh.

You get a wood bed like soldiers sleep.

Oh, like soldiers?

Uh huh.

Just lined the walls like?

That's right.

Boy!

Every day, every, every lunch, two clock they have
orchestra play.

Oh, they did?

Dance, somebody, he feel good.

Uh huh. Was it a - what kind of a ship was it? A,
a, freighter or a, or regular ocean liner or a.....

Oh yeh, was big ship already.

A regular ocean liner?

Yes, but a..... not big 'nough see?

(MRS. H.) Three chimneys, that's a.....

(EL.) Right.

Not big 'nough, not big 'nough.

But not big enough for as many people that were on it?

There she goes. (chuckles)

Got seasick?

When we start to eat one a, one lunch....

Uh huh.

Bout twelve o'clock we have a table. That man bring the lunch he says, "Everybody hold plates your hand."

Uh huh.

I don't knew. What's what's that fer?

Everybody hold plates in your hand?

I no hold it, but later en "Floh!" everything on floor.

Oh, I see what you mean.

Yes, what I mean.

Eh, the waves were rocking the ship and

Yeh, yeh.

And if you didn't hold your plate....

That, that time I lost.

If you didn't hold your plate in your hand then you lost your lunch. It was on the floor.

Oh sure.

Did you get three meals a day?

Yeh, we, we have pretty good feed.

It was good, it was good enough.

You get everything you wanted. We get herrings. We get pickles. Anything you wanted.

Herring and pickle.

Yeh.

Did a anything important happen on the boat ever a.... did you have any trouble? I know at um....what year was this that you were coming?

1914.

1914?

Yeh.

A were you having any trouble? Did a any other a ship step you or.....

No, no everything's quiet.

You had a safe voyage all the way?

Everything's quiet. Go nice and smooth, too.

How were the, the rest of the people on the boat?

Were they a getting homesick or did they.....

Yeh, a so many people all most women.

The women were getting homesick?

Yeh.

Were there a lot of families or were there just mainly single people like you?

Well, I tell you true, I don't know much about because you can't go asking everyone.

Right, uh huh.

You know what I mean.

Right, I know.

Because this is ---- here, two, three, here. I just sit with myself.

How did you a get the money for your ticket? Was a, was it expensive?

Yeh, they was - costs me ship's card ...a... one hundred thirteen rubles.

And that would be....

....Uh....(Russian underbreath) two dollars for two rubles.

Two dollars for two rubles? That would be....

No, one rubles.

Two dollars for....

No, no two rubles for one dollar.

Two rubles for one dollar? That would be fifty, fifty some dollars.

Yeh, that's right.

That your, your ticket cost.

And it cost pass...passport cost me eighteen, eighteen..

The nine, nine dollars?

Nine dollars.

That's close to seventy dollars.

And I give him five rubles, you know, for the constable
for a tip.

Uh huh.

(DAU.) For making it.

For, for giving you a passport.

Because he was good to me. No, he was friend of mine.

He was friend of my brother.

When you went from your village to a - what's the name
of this Lu...

Libau.

Libau?

Yes.

How did you go from there?

We go on train.

On the train from there?

Yes, train take me right there.

Did you pay for a ticket on this?

No, there was everything's paid already when you get
ship's card it's paid all the way through.

Ohhhhhh, I see, The ship's card, the ticket.

See, we stay, we stay in Libau like we come
this afternoon. We stay all night there. And other morning we,
we started eleven thirty.

Uh huh.

Go, keep going.

On the ship?

Yeh, that's right.

Oh, you just spent one night.

We stayed there all night, yeh.

In L

Big place, eh.

Is it a big city?

They, they check and search every, every suitcase.

They, they checked all your suitcases?

Everything, everything.

And searched them?

I have two bottles vodka.

(Laughter)

They have to open.

Two bottles of vodka that you had to show them.

Yes, ----- (name of kind)

Oh.

That time the Czar's vodka - good!

Did they let you keep them?

Had to break the seal.

Did they let you keep them?

Yeh, they let you keep them.

They did let you keep them though after they broke
the seal on them?

I just thought take them in case - I never drink much
before, you know.

Uh huh.

But I thought by time I go take in case the ship, you
know.

Did you just....did you have a lot of luggage or
just your.....

Just one luggage.

Just one suitcase?

One suitcase, that's all.

That was everything you had?

I had coat....

Coat.

Shoes, I mean boots, boots.

Boots.

Heavy boots.

"Shapka."

A "shapka?"

"Furashka."

What's a "furashka?"

...A...like a....it's a....

(MRS. H.) Cap.

A cap?

Like this a capital here somebody....

Oh, uh huh. A when you a first came over to the United
...a...United...a...did you get off the boat at all in Canada?

No, they won't let you get off.

No, not until you got into New York. Wha...was that
Ellis Island?

Kastel, Kastel Garden Yeh, Kastel.....

Ellis Island, right. And when you first saw the
United States?

When I se...see they say, "Hey, hey there's Liberty!"

Here's Liberty?

Liberty Statue.

Statue of Liberty?

Everybody prayer.

Everybody did that? They folded their hands?

Yeh.

I bet they were thankful to finally be there.

Everybody pray (Choked voice) Tsk! Tsk!

Oh boy, I bet that was emotional...a...when you first
...a..decided that you were going to come to America, did a, did
your parents say anything about this? Were they, you know, a glad
for you to come or didn't they like the idea?

I write, I send them money - my mother and father.

(MR.&MRS. H. CONVERSE IN RUSSIAN)

Oh, you said that you would send them money?

They didn't even knew much about it?

Oh, just they didn't know.

I just tell them at last I get to go.

You just told them you were going to go?

They know I didn't not goin' to stay. They know that.

You were a pretty independent person?

Sure.

You were all ready?

No, they know I'm not going to stay the farm.

Uh huh.

I told them.

That you wouldn't stay on the farm?

Sure, I have difference clothes, difference you know
everything.

Uh huh.

I buy good clothes, you know, over there come here.

Uh huh. Well, for - when you went to a Ellis Island and after they, you know, s....gave you your tags and told you where to go, a where was the first place you went from there.

To Philadelphia.

To Philadelphia? To meet this Jewish family that you knew?

Spring, Spring Garden.

Right.

Station.

And what was the first thing that you a....the first job that you had here?

Oh, first job....

Uh huh.

First, first, no first thing I stop the ----- people you know, where I come from and the man there they didn't recognize mr.

They didn't recognize you?

He was pretty old, you know.

Did they know you were coming?

No, they don't know.

Oh.

I just had address, that's all.

You just had their address. They didn't even know you were.....

That time was difference. It's not like now you see.

In other words you...you knew that

He say, "No, I don't know you," he say.

Uh huh.

Well, I, I say, "Wait, wait a minute." Then I go in corner and the cop standing on the corner. I say a...."Mr. Police,

can you tell me sleep." Like there, see. He say, "Yeh, right here round the small hotel," you know.

In other words, you were asking him where to sleep and he was telling you.....

Yeh, he told me, he come down, he tell that woman if he wanted something, that give him something to eat. I, I knew I don't eat much because I was scared - beginning. In the mornning I get up. I eat oatmeal.. I remember! I never ferget that!

That you had oatmeal the first morning here?

Yeh, she, she give me coffee. I say, "What's that?"

"Coffee."

And you never had coffee before?

No, I never, drinkin' tea all the time over there.

Oh.

We never had Europe coffee. Not that part where I come from.

Uh huh.

Then I go back again, eh about, nine o'clock - ten thirty.

To the family?

I ringing bell. A la...lady come Gitlia come.

Uh huh.

Gitlia, she's name Gitlia, you know.

Gitlia?

Yeh, Gitlia. Oh, she say, "Leon, what, what are you doing here?"

She recognized you then?

Yeh, she recognize me. She - "Come on the house."

I go in the house. She make it breakfast.

Uh huh.

She make it cocoa - like coffee, you know.

Right, hot cocoa.

Yeh, hot cocoa.

Uh huh.

And then, then we started talk, you know. I say, "Well, we have to look for job now." She say, "I give you room on the third floor for nothing."

She gave you your first room?

Yeh, on.....

Third floor?

On her third floor for nothing.

That was nice.

Yeh, then I help her. They have business in West Philadelphia, delivery like, you know.

Delivery business, uh huh.

Delivery business, yeh - all a kind wholesale.

Right.

I a help pack. They give me dollar a day.

A dollar a day?

That's all.

Your first salary?

Just for while.

Uh huh.

Then later on somebody friends, they ask me what kind job I do. Could do it.

Her friends asked you what kind of job?

Yeh, I say, I, I help my brother-in-law cause he was tailor. I iron his clothes.

Your brother-in-law was the a tailor?

Tailor.

And....

Yeh, I learned that.

And you learned that the, how to iron his clothes?

He say, "All right, we have, we have job Tenth, Tenth
and Arch."

Tenth and Arch?

Sweat a sweat a shop.

Sweat shep?

Yeh, iron.

Oh, ironing, I see.

(DAU.) And they call it a sweat shop.

All woman's, all woman's dress, you know, shirts.

Oh, ironing a clothes and they called this place.....

Yes.

A sweat shop, huh?

And they, they no have electric iron like now.

Uh huh.

They have gas iron, ten pounds.

Gas iron?

Ten pounds, iron.

(DAU.) It weighed ten pounds.

Oh, a weighted iron.

Uh huh.

Oh, my goodness.

And when I work all, all day I can't -----

(DAU.) His arm would be so tired.

Your arm would be so tired.

Uh huh, sure. Twelve dollars a week.

Twelve dollars a week?

Five days and a half to work.

Five and a half days?

That's right.

Did a were there any Russian churches right around here when you first

Yes, yeh.

You were able to..... were there a many people?

I meet a, I meet a so many friends after while.

Were there, were there any other people that you knew from Russia besides this Jewish family?

They come. Yeh, they have. After while they come after me.

They came after you though?

Yes.

Uh huh.

I come first. Course there was before but a this fellow he's a from the other village, you know. He's got marriage from there with a girl.

Uh huh.

Still but he's a from, you know, belong to our village.

Did any of your brothers or sisters a ever think of coming over to join you?

Nobody.

Nobody did?

I still by myself. Nobody here be..besides this family.

Nobody met you there?

Nuh, nobody, nobody.

And you came here. It takes a lot of courage to come to a new country.

Nobody my family all is in Europe was killed over in war, first war.

Your what?

Secend war.

All your family?

(DAU.) All.

They were killed, yeh.

(DAU.) During World War Two.

Yeh, killed everybody.

Oh, I see.

(DAU.) No one left.

There was, there was run 'bout three four times, you know, you heard that.

Back a when the a...

(DAU.) Germans.

Germans ran ever.

Killed everybody.

Back and forth ever Russia.

I got nobody new.

Uh huh. Well, what happened that you finally ended up in Wilmington?

Well, I tell you I have a...a..where I meet, beard, a people, you know, Philadelphia, where I go the club, Russian club a..a..Marshall and Green. They have a Russian club that time.

Uh huh. Uh huh.

I meet so many people, you know, Russian people. They have some from Wilmington. They work in Malleable Iron.

(DAU.) Eastern Malleable Iron.

(MR. H.) Eastern Malleable Iron.

Uh huh.

They say, "you come down maybe you can get job up there. You try," he say. Because there was Depression.

Uh huh.

That time then I come on August the sixth.

August the sixth? How long was that that you were
in Philadelphia now - just a few months?

Well, from a, from a March third to August sixth.

In other words you came to America March third?

Yeh.

And till August sixth....

August sixth I go to Wi..Wilmington.

To Wilmington and a....

I got a first job in Eastern Malleable Iron Company.

Uh huh.

And where did you live when you came here? Where, in
what area?

Well, y... you have to get room to board with some
people.

Boarding house?

I pay three dollars a month for room.

Three dollars a month for room and board?

That's right. No, no, board extra.

Board was extra, oh.

Every, every eat.

Uh huh.

And, and I get sixteen cents an hour.

Sixteen cents an hour?

First money I paid.

And what did you do at a....

Well, I work laborer.

Laborer work?

Just a laborer.

Uh huh.

Then I a... but..a..from the a August-January, I
get quarter.

Quarter an hour. See.....

It goin' up because war started Europe August a.....

They needed more a....

Yeh.

Iron and steel.

They get little busy, little busy. Well, 1914, I
get job in the fall a 1916 - '17, I get a foreman.

You were a foreman by 1916-1917?

Yes.

So you really pushed your way right up?

I werk 'bout year and a half.

Uh huh.

I get that foreman...job...

That was really good. Did a... when you first came
and you, you were still living at the boarding house then?

Yeh, that time.

What, what area - where, what street, do you remember
where?

Oh, south, south Wilmington.

Around Claymont and Heald Street? Around there?

A...a...

(DAU&MRS.H.) Apple and Claymont.

(MR. H.) Apple and Claymont. (chuckles)

Apple and Claymont Street?

(DAU.) Your, your, your great grandmother's house.

My great grandmother's house?

(MR. H.) That's right.

(DAU.) That's right.

Oh, I see. Uh, when you first, when you first came here, uh, were most of the people who were living right around there in those streets, were they a Russian or were they Polish or a.....

A....they go...a...they had that time all kind of people.

There was all mixed?

Polish, Ukrainian, Russian,,but not many a colored people that time.

But a there weren't any a....were there like Italians or.....

Italians, yeh.

Oh, there were?

Yeh, yeh, they have all kind like I told you.

(MRS. H.) Jews.

(MR. H.) Jewish people

Uh huh.

(MR. H.) Jewish people all most in the business, you know that.

Were there any Russian churches yet in Wilmington?

We was, we organize in 1915.

In 1915 you organized?

Yeh, organized on a Claymont street.

That was a the a St. Michael's Church on Claymont?

That's right. That's where I was, I was there.

And were you on.....

Same that time to now, see.

From 1915 to now?

(MRS. H.) He was one of the organizers.

And you were one of the organizers of that church?

That's right. That's the one I organize church, not myself but.....

Right, but....

We have people - majority.

Uh huh. Well, now how, "GeGe" how did most of the people, the Americans, like your boss at a Malibu....

(DAU.) Malleable.

Malleable Iron and a the people did, did they a treat the people who were coming to the United States fairly? Did they a.....

I treated good my people when I was boss, foreman.

Well, how did they treat you and your friends though? Were Americans friendly to you? Did they want to help you?

(Conversation in Russian in background)

Yeh, I have my boss. My boss, you knew, big boss.

Uh huh.

George Kingsley, he's a English.

Uh huh.

He treat me good. He learn me. He give me hell though some of the time. But still I know he's.....

You knew he meant it well.

He's fight, he fight for my side, see.

Right.

He wanted me put a right a....

(MRS. H.) Track.

He wanted you to go straight right from the beginning.

That's right. And he told me strictly, "You have to keep people strictly....a...watch them...a..because if you no goin' a do it, you goin' to get fired."

So there, there wasn't any prejudice?

(MRS. H.) No.

At this time?

See, that time there was difference like that. They don't have no unions that time. Oh, they no unions. I hire people on the gate house. I lay off people. I fire people - myself!

However you need, you need them, right?

We no have that time unions, see.

(MRS. H.) ----- head of personnel.

See, I was do everything that time. You go to the gate house. There was bout fifty people, maybe more, stand look for job. You have, you have to use head which one you're going to pick.

Uh huh.

You don't know which one's good, bad.

Well, then let's see, by 1916, 1917 when you were a foreman....

Yeh.

How old were you then? That would have been....

Year and a half I get foreman.

In a year and a half you would be.....

(MRS. H.) '14 he was....

In '14 you were twenty, so by 1917 you were twenty-three years old.

Yeh, yeh.

And already you were a, already you were a foreman.

I was, I was strong..

You were strong.

Oh yeh. I learned it every, every job in the shop..

Well, when did you get married ever here?

(MRS. H.) 1918.

Well, I decided I ought to go back to Europe.

Oh, this is after you decided you weren't going to go to Europe?

Then, then I, I look for a, for girl to get married.

And where did you find a girl to get married?

I find, I find where I live.

Right where you lived?

That's right. (laughter)

This is my grandmother.

That's right.

Where was she from?

She's from Austria, Galicia.

From Austria?

Yeh, she's from Austria, yeh. She speak a, I think, around four languages, I think.

She could speak four languages?

She was German. She was German but she speak Polish and Jewish.

(DAU.) Russian.

Ukrainian.

(EL.) And she could speak Russian.

Little.

A little but you taught her more? (laughter)

(MRS. H.) I didn't.....

But she....see, you - the Polish the Russian it's pretty close.

Right only the accent is different.

But she understand me.

She understood you.

Oh yeh!

But just a little bit of trouble talking.

But that's where I learned all kind language, see.

Uh huh. And by, by 1918 then were you, you were able to have your church, your wedding ceremony in that St. Michael's Church?

St. Michael's Church.

You had a building then and everything?

(MRS. H.) Yes.

Yeh. Oh, we married right from the house, you know, where I boarded.

You were married in the house?

Yeh, that's right.

(MRS. H.) Church.

In the church?

Oh, in the church, yeh, yeh.

(MRS. H.) The reception was in the house.

Oh, but your reception was in the house

We no have no hall like now.

Uh huh.

Reception everything I have one big wedding one week-full week.

Of a wedding? A whole week?

(MRS. H.) It lasted. It lasted.

Started, started from a Wednesday and lasted till.....

They give one week. I have vacation, first vacation - foreman that time.

And, and everybody celebrated all this time?

Everybody dance. The orchestra play every evening.

The orchestra played every evening?

Every evening.

My goodness!

Yes indeed! Ask your mom.

And all your friends came and

Yes indeed!

Every evening and did you have din...dinner for them
all the time?

Yeh, lunch, sure. Every day they have everything.

Every day?

(MRS. H.) Have salad, ham....

We have five, five, three kinds beer on tap.

Three kinds of beer?

A...root beer....I mean a root beer.

Uh huh.

Birch beer and regular beer.

Uh huh.

See.

What, what was this customary to have a weddings to
last this long?

Well, a.....

(MRS. H.) No.

Not usually - this is just an extra special one?

See, don't, don't forget everything was mine.

(Tape turned off and resumed)

You had said when you first came to a America, you
had to go to a school here, Number Fourteen School.

Yeh, I went.

And you went to the Post Office school to learn a
to get your naturalization?

Three months in the Post Office.

To get you naturalization papers?

Yeh.

Ud, did you have any language difficulties a...
did...was it hard to communicate at first? To get....

It was pretty hard to spell...spelling.

To....it was hard spelling our language?

Yeh, it was very hard spelling from, from Russian
United States, you know, the reading writing that's, that's pretty
hard, Course this spell like now..... like a Philadelphia, now it
says for instance.

Uh huh.

We have to put "F" not "P."

Right, right, uh huh.

See, that's all mixed up from beginning.

Right, just like.....

Now, I know but before was awful tough.

I know because a we, you put down letters for different
sounds and everything.

The Post Office, they, they didn't learn all the Con-
stitutions in history book - each state they ask a us, read for
each state what state grow, what each state raise - every single
state United States.

You had to know all this?

You have to know everything.

Uh huh.

It was tough. It was hard, really.

I can imagine. What was there like.....

Man for....you know, he was teacher. He was man.

Uh huh.

Mr. Poole his name.

Uh huh.

Boy, I tell you, he's a.....

A, when a you first founded that a, the, the group of you founded St. Michael's Church, was this the first a church around here like that - the first Eastern Orthodox Church?

(MRS. H.) That's the first.

Yes.

That was the first one. And then later on there were some other churches on Heald Street. What a were they?

They was, they was Ukrainian see.

Tell me something. I've heard that the Ukrainian people don't like to be considered with the Russian people and the Russian people.....

Cause - see these Ukrainian people they all most come from Austria, see.

Oh, I see.

Austria, Galicia they call it.

Uh huh.

See this is difference a....idea....pretty near all the same people you understand.

Uh huh.

But they don't like a Russians cause Russians is hard. Russians, you know what I mean.

In other words strong, courageous people.

That's right.

Uh huh.

That's why they don't like they say.

And that's the only thing really?

But that's all the same people - I don't see no difference.

But when, when they were away from the church, did you

mix?

(MRS. H.) Yes.

Were your families together? It was just the one idea of the church?

Oh yeh, we go like a the parties same place. I used to play orchestra with....violin and the party. We don't have no difference. We have good time and all. But Ukrainian people very nice.

Uh huh. You played in an orchestra ever here, too?

Yeh, we have play orchestra, you knew, violin.

And you played the vio.....

We have a four pieces orchestra.

Four pieces in the orchestra?

Yeh, clarinet, violin and accordian and a bass.

Bass fiddle?

Bass fiddle, yeh.

Uh huh. Did you a.....

Zoom zoom!

Zoom zoom. (Laughter) Did you a in other words during the day you would work at the, in a, a steel factory and then a some....

Every!

Evening.

Every evening we go practice, you knew.

Uh huh.

We play every evening all most party.

And this would be extra money for you?

That's right.

Coming in and at the same time you still like to do it. Did the people still get together and have a, a, did they all get

together and play their instruments and sing like you said they did in the village in Russia?

Sure.

The same type of thing. They enjoyed this?

Yeh, same type. They sing, dance.

Uh huh.

Old time Cossacks (?), polka.

Uh huh.

You know, they have ----- different.

Oh, when they had World War One and a you heard about a the revolution and the a Czar being taken out.....

No, I was here. I don't know much about that.

Oh you didn't. This is what I want to know. You didn't hear much about this?

When I came here, there it was quiet like I told you.

Right.

I came here March third and the war started in Europe, this August sixth.

(MRS. H.) Fourteenth (Quietly)

(MR. H) 1914.

1914 it was.

See, you see I'm lucky I get away.

Uh huh.

From that trouble.

So that a the, the, it didn't it didn't really have any effect on your life?

Then I run away because I was not old enough Europe go in army. I was----- years old, but in this country I have to go, but a when I work defense Malleable Iron, I was foreman.

You were a.....

They held me down. They den't let me go.

In other words you were a, you were exempted because
you were.....

Yeh.

In the steel factory.

You know somebody - Beard, Board of Defense, you know.

Right you were just like today if you work for a
government.

That's right.

You can get exempted.

I, I told my superintendent, I says, "A....I got it
for first...a...number, first, you know, the card."

(DAU.) One "A."

You know for the that time it wasn't classes, see.

(DAU.) Uh huh.

(EL.) There weren't cl... I see.

I show him. He says, "Let me see. Leon, my friend,
I'm going to let you go." I says, "Why?" "Cause we, we need you."

And they wouldn't let you go into the army because.....

But, bout two weeks after that I got fifth class. I
knew fifth class - that's far away.

Uh huh.

And, and they no take me.

Right. A, a, how long was it ...a..this was in 1918
you got married, did, have you, did you always continue working...a...
at a Malleable?

I work at Malleable Iron till 19.....

(MRS. H.) 19...32.

'32.

1932.

June second, see, sixth or second, I get sick - I
quit!

Oh, just quit, just like that?

Eighteen years I work up there.

Uh huh.

I have a reference, good a reference from a company.

Uh huh.

I still have some place.

Well, what, what did you decide to do then?

Well, we have already a....see, we have already that
cigar store. We bought it 1927.

(MRS. H.) Candy.

(EL.) 1927 you bought a cigar and candy store?

But Mom to stay in the day time and I work, I help
in the evening.

Oh, I see.

It was a little bit too much for us, see.

Well, how long did you have the candy store a...
after this?

(MRS. H.) From 1927.....

Well....a....

(MRS. H.) 1927.

'27 that's three that's six years.

Till 1935.

'35, that's eight years.

1927 to....

Eight years.

1935.

That's eight years.

What happened at that time?

Then we decided - Roosevelt elected - we decided to get a license. They come back beer and whiskey.

Oh, this is after Prohibition, right?

Yeh, we decide, we decide to get pr...license to have taproom.

And to have a taproom.

Yeh, we have taproom off W-----. For twenty-six years we operate it.

Uh huh.

19.....

(MRS. H.) '61.

'61 we sell.

All that time?

Now, I'm a (Chuckles sadly)

In retirement?

In retirement.

In good old retirement.

Yeh, take it easy.

So really you had quite a, a experience and a.....

That's it.

A varied life here. You had worked for the steel factory and then a candy store and then back to the taproom.

Then you ask a me how many children I have?

How many children did you have?

Well, we have a so far a six, six nice looking girls.

Six girls no boys? (Laughingly)

No boys, no.

No boys.

(MRS. H.) No sens.

And a we have a ten grandchildren.

Ten grandchildren?

And a one grandchild married already - teacher for the school.

Uh huh. I bet I know who she is. (Laughter)

And then what else I could say - wait a minute.

A, when your children were growing up in America, did a you try to impress upon them the, the history of the Russian people; and did you a, were you as strict about the church as the church as your parents had been with you?

I tried but this country can't be strict a like a Europe you know.

Uh huh.

Cause you could tell them nice way. Children they, they do more if you heller, you know what I mean.

Right, but a.....

Cause a.....

Were you able to teach them the Russian language and

.....

I try, I try the beginning but later on I forget myself.

Oh really, was....

Cause, you know, always American language in the business.

Uh huh.

You knew you can't remember everything. Another thing I, I balled up so many languages. I speak seven different languages.

You speak seven different languages?

That's right.

Now....

Sure.

Russian, Polish?

Ukrainian.

Ukrainian.

You speak some German.

Yeh.

I know that.

Yeh.

Some German.

(MRS. H.) Some Jewish.

(EL.) Jewish.

(DAU.) Yiddish.

(MR. H.) Yiddish, yeh.

(MRS. H.) Italian.

(EL.) Some Italian I know you speak.

(MR. H.) Oh yeh, I "dabbish Italiane" all right. (Laughter)

So you really got around?

Yeh.

A...but did a....when the children....I remember you saying something about they went to church school?

Yeh, they all Sunday school, yes.

Sunday school?

(DAU.) Yeh, Russian school after they came, after they came....

(MR. H.) Yeh, we have.

(EL.) After they went to the regular school, the American school during the day.

(MRS. H.) Public school.

(MR. H.) Yeh, they go.

(EL.) Public schools, then they went to church school after this even during the week?

(MRS. H.) Uh huh.

This is a, this is plus their Sunday school?

(MRS. H.) That's right.

(MR. H.) As a me why ----- (Russian words)

(EL.) What? Why don't you tell me "Babe?"

(MRS. H.) A...a..."GeGe" wants to say they went to Russian school after public school and they went.....

Uh huh.

(MRS. H.) Attended church all the time and still attend choir ----- They sing in choir but they can't hold a Russian conversation. (Laughter)

They can sing the a Russian songs?

(MRS. H.) In the choir.

In the choir but they can't hold a Russian conversation?

(MR. H.) Yes, no, no, that's it. That's exactly like I told you.

(EL.) Bey!

(MR..H.) Well we, anyhow we half and half now for the church - half Slavonic and half a.....

(EL.) Now the church services are half in Slavonic and half in English.

Yeh, that's right. Half American, half American.

Uh huh. But this is still the same church - no, there's a new church.

Same, same thing.

But there's a new building.

Yeh, I know but same, same, same church.

Uh huh, uh....

No difference, all young generation wanted more American, see.

Uh huh.

The service more Americans now in church.

Did you have a... when the Depression hit the United States, did you have a.....

Oh, we have 1930, '32, yes. We have the Depression pretty bad a but a.....

Did it hurt your business? You had the candy store then.

They, they hurt little business but I don't mind because I still was a my weekly pay, you know.

From the steel factory?

From the, the shop, you know.

Uh huh.

And I no, I no, I no feel no Depression that time because.....

You didn't feel it that much?

Because I make out all right.

Uh huh.

But people who work two, three days a week, you know, don't forget that time.

Uh huh. And didn't you also take in boarders at that time?

We have, we have few beginning but later on - they was so much a work, you know Mom.

With six chi..... with six girls.

Yeh, that's right. And we den't care much.

I can imagine there was.

Yeh, that's all troubles there.

A do you...a... in your family a today do you still a try to remember some of the Russian customs especially a the religious ones like at Christmas and Easter time?

That's right. I remember that.

Like at a Christmas time, I know a you don't celebrate the holiday on December twenty-fifth but January....

That's right.

January seventh.

We still, we still celebrate the Little Christmas.

The Little Christmas?

That's right.

Uh huh.

And when you a celebrate the Christmas a I've been to ...a...a program they put a on called a "Yolka."

Yes, that's right.

And a.....

We have every year.

What does "Yolka" mean?

The "Yolka" that mean a

(MRS. H.) Christmas tree.

Christmas tree?

(MR.H.) Christmas tree, yeh, that's right.

And I know this is a favorite thing.

They sing, they sing the church songs.

(MRS. H.) Carols.

(EL.) Carols.

And they, they at the last they sing a couple folk songs.

Uh huh.

What they call them?

I knew the children always like to do this.

We sing all the ones before I remember European songs

"Birch - White Birch Tree."

Birch trees?

"Byroza"

"Byroza?"

Yes, "White Birch Tree."

This is a favorite song of yours in Europe?

Oh yes. I remember. It's call a "Byroza Sto Yla."

And what does that mean?

That means a, a out the field a birch tree stands.

Uh huh.

Oh, this is very important to Europe.

This song is very important ever in Europe?

Yeh, birch trees.

(MRS. H.) Birch trees are.

That's the best.

Uh huh...a...when you mentioned birch trees, I remember you told me once that a... you a used - didn't you use horses tails or something for a fishing rod?

Yeh, they made we.....

Why did.....

We make self in Russian. I mean that a reds.

You make your own reds?

From a, a horse tail - hair, you know, long.

Uh huh.

Because it never break it, never rotted.

They never broke and they never rotted.

No, they never, never did that.

(MRS. H.) The tail was the line.

Right, the horses tail was the line and the pole was made out of.....

(MRS. H.) Birch tree.

The birch tree, right, uh huh. How do you feel about

a Russia when you know that you can't return to it?

Oh, I feel very a..... (hesitation)

(DAU.)

Sad?

Well, it's very important to me, you know.

Uh huh.

But this children you know, they don't - they, they don't know much about it.

Uh huh.

Like this - you're talking about fishing, you know, trips. I've been fishing from little boy, you know.

Uh huh.

But see, this young generation they want to see this.

Right.

Because they never see.

Right, just like a you.....

See...

Were saying, in Russia in the winter time what did you used to get arounda...a... sleighs?

A..... there was sleds.

Sleds?

Homemade sleds.

Homemade sleds?

That's right.

Uh huh.

Skates.

And skates.

Home made skates, too, we make.

Everything homemade?

Yes indeed!

Did your children have any of these homemade things in

America or was it all bought for them?

(MRS. H.) All bought.

They bought it everything ready.

Everything was bought. So in a way they kind of missed out on all this.....

Believe it or not in a Europe, in a Europe if you get wet shoes they get licking.

If you got wet shoes, you get a licking?

Got a licking, yeh, because we go on the sleds.

Oh.

You know what we do?

What?

We...ch...we take a shoes off and put a heavy a heavy a...

(DAU.) Burlap?

Burlap around your feet?

Yeh, that's what they use it for.

And so you did so you wouldn't get your shoes wet.

Then when we change them, you know, in, in the shed(?) put the shoes on, come in the house.

So you wouldn't get your shoes....

Cause they, they heller you get a, get wet.

Uh huh. If, if it were if you were told that a you could, you would have a passport and you were a allowed a to go back, would you want to go back and visit your village now?

I could go any time tour - tourist, I think.

Right, you'd have.....

Cause I'm a citizen now. But still what I want to go if I, I, I don't see, don't know nobody there?

It would.....

I don't have nobody there.

It would be so changed?

I maybe find somebody.. .. faraway like a - maybe my a ...

(DAU.) Distant cousins.

Cousins maybe a some....

(MRS. H.) Neighbors.

Neighbors, somebody.

Uh huh, but all of your family, your direct family....

I, I don't know because I had to write letters some time
to find out but it's pretty hard to find out now.

Did, did you keep in contact at all?

I did before but a.....

(MRS. H.) He used to send money.

I used, I still have receipts from old man Emory.

For a what, the money?

(MRS. H.) Sending the money to his father.

Send him citizen, citizenship tickets, send money to
Europe. You could buy the ship ticket.

Oh, steamship ticket in other words. You would give him
the money and he would.....

Old man Emory not this - his father, you know, lawyer Emory

Right, lawyer Emory, uh huh.

Yeh,this is, this is lawyer Emory's father.

(MRS. H.) And he was the steamship agent.

And he would send the money there.

Uh.

I, I could show you the receipts sometime.

O.K. Did a when, when you stopped a contact, did a -
was it because you had to or because, you knew, there wasn't anybody
to really keep in contact with or did you have to.....

(MRS. H.) War broke out.

War, war come. They no allow that time writing.

Uh huh.

They, they, they not - can't correspond with nobody.

So you had to stop then?

Oh sure, you had to because what you going to do?

Right, uh huh. That kind of ended it all.

I, I used to send a two dollar bills in the letter there but they, they write me don't do it because they get punished if they find out.

They got punished - they would get punished over in Russia?

Yes, yes, if they find out I sent them some money.

Oh, really?

Sure, that, that time beginning....

Uh huh.

Now is changed so much.

(TAPE TURNED OFF AND ON)

Well, Mr. Hnida I really thank you for your cooperation for telling us your story.

You're, you're quite welcome, welcome.

Thank you very much. I'm sure we'll all enjoy listening to this years and years from now. O.K., Goodbye.