

1-4-1975

## Marie Golden Wexler, transcript only

Marie Golden Wexler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalworks.union.edu/berkoralhistories>

---

### Recommended Citation

Wexler, Marie Golden, "Marie Golden Wexler, transcript only" (1975). *Lucille W. Brown and Stephen M. Berk Oral Histories of American Jews*. 14.  
<https://digitalworks.union.edu/berkoralhistories/14>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections And Archives at Union | Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Lucille W. Brown and Stephen M. Berk Oral Histories of American Jews* by an authorized administrator of Union | Digital Works. For more information, please contact [digitalworks@union.edu](mailto:digitalworks@union.edu).

LB Now that would be about how many miles from Budapest?

MW It would be ~~about~~ 500 miles from Budapest,

LB Now let's go back to the beginning. You give us your name for the tape ...

MW Marie Golden Wexler,

LB Could you tell us again what year you were born?

MW 1900, September the 29th

LB I'm September, too...

LB The name of the town? <sup>At</sup>

MW Oh, the name of the town where I was born: Sernye

LB Now, I know very little Hungarian history... I know Hungary was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and then it became almost an entity unto itself within the empire. Was there a king? <sup>Also France?</sup>

MW No, Franz Joseph was the emperor.

LB Now how were you ruled during that time, before the first war?

MW Franz Joseph, before the first war

LB But you had your own, you must have had your own separate governing body within Hungary...

MW No, there was a parliament, but of course the king was Franz Joseph.

LB I see. But Hungary exerted enormous influence upon events that took place within the Empire

MW That was <sup>before</sup> Horti, wasn't it?

LB Even before, when it came to a question about what to do with the Serbs, and Slavs, and before the First World War,

MW Oh yeah, that I don't remember.

LB You were young then.

MW Yeah, that I don't remember.

LB Hungary was very important and Franz Joseph had to pay attention to what the Hungarians said.

MW Yes, because he was our emperor and he had to pay attention to what we said

LB Well, he was the emperor of a lot of people and didn't pay any attention, but he did pay attention to the Hungarians

MW To the Hungarians, yes. Well I don't know, What else do you want to know?

LB Well, I want to know a lot of things. Now, you said you were born in a town named Sernye. Could you describe the town?

MW Well it was really a little country town with probably about, maybe a thousand population, maybe 2,000, I don't know exactly. But a small town, and, of course, we lived in the middle of 500 acres--

LB Who's "we"? Your family?

MW Yeah, my father and my mother and me, yes. So, and we went into the village often; but not very far from that...

LB In other words, you did not live in the village itself.

MW Well it was the village, it was Sernye, but we had these 500 acres, and we had on the edge of it our home.

LB Now did your father own the 500 acres?

MW Yes.

LB So what was he, a farmer?

MW No, he had a, um, a forest

LB Yes, <sup>forest</sup>

MW And he ~~did~~ also farming, but he didn't do it himself, he was a gentleman farmer. He had a couple of families working for him on the fields, and everything, you know.

LB What kind of farming, what crops?

MW Well, we had wheat, and we had corn, we had rye, we had oats.

LB And who did the heavy work?

LH Jews ~~or~~ Hungarians?  
 MW No, there were no Jews to do the work. We had from... They came... Ruthenians,  
 LB Ruthenians.  
 MW Yeah, they came.  
 LB They were from the Ukraine, actually  
 MW To harvest and to put down the seeds at the time of seeding and  
 LB at the time of harvesting they used to come, about 300 peasants that  
 used to come and do the work.  
 LB Now how long did they stay?  
 MW Well they would stay until it's over.  
 LB Which would be--  
 MW Maybe a month  
 LB And where would they live while they were there?  
 MW Well, they had, they lived outside, of course. We had big barns and we had  
 outdoor sheds, you know big sheds and on the hay they would sleep and they  
 would cook in cauldrons and in big cauldrons, they would cook their food when  
 they came home in the evening.  
 LB Did they bring families with them?  
 MW Yes, well there were no children. But it was <sup>just</sup> husbands and wives and just  
 grown ups.  
 LB So in a way they were the Hungarian migrant farmers?  
 MW No they weren't migrant farmers. They were, they spoke a different language  
 than we did all together. It was not Hungarian. It was a Slavic...  
 LB No. They were Hungary's version of our, of America's migrant farmer, like  
 the Mexicans.  
 MW Yes, yes. They used to come in and do the work.  
 LB And what kind of pay did they get?  
 MW Well, father paid them very well and they took home a lot of food and things  
 besides pay. I don't know exactly how much he paid because it wasn't my...  
 But I know they were very happy. They were singing every night till... almost  
 going... happy people and it was very nice. I was just interested in them.  
 But to ask my father how much he paid, I didn't ask...  
 LB. So, how you lived on this farm which was 500 ~~now~~ acres. Your father was  
 actually in the lumbering business, then in a sense...  
 MW Well, not in lumbering. In logging. Not lumbering, just logging.  
 LB And how many people were in your family?  
 MW We were ten of us.  
 LB Ten?  
 MW But I don't remember them because I was the last one.  
 LB You were the baby?  
 MW Well, almost. I had another, a brother but there wasn't much difference be-  
 tween us, so I don't remember...  
 LB Were there eight children then and the parents?  
 MW We were ten of us and one little girl died before I was born. <sup>W.C.</sup> There were nine  
 of us all the time.  
 LB Nine children and two adults, two parents?  
 MW Two parents/  
 LB No grandparents? Aunts, uncles?  
 MW Well, I don't remember my grandparents.  
 LB How did you live in a large house or a small house?  
 MW It was a large house.  
 LB Could you describe it?  
 MW Well, it had very large kitchen and it had a very, two separate rooms on  
 each side and in the center like a great big drawing room. We had one, two  
 three, four, five... about seven rooms and a veranda that we ate there all the  
 time. We used to open up <sup>upstairs up the top</sup> you know for the summer time.

- LE A wide rope?
- EW Wide rope that you go and it opens up for Sukkos you see, you open up the veranda.
- LE A canopy?
- EW Not a canopy. But a roof. But the roof opened up, in two, in the center. It was all around the house, very large. Very large terrace, all around the house.
- LE Stone terrace?
- EW I don't remember any more. It had pillars. Pillars and stone flooring.
- LE If there were pillars, the pillars must have supported something.
- EW It was supported. This was in the center. This was like a big dining room, the center part of it and from there the terrace reached out all around the house. All around the house except in the back. We had...the terrace was as wide as this room almost...about six, seven feet and ~~about~~ that reached pretty long on each side of this dining room like, and when we came out from the house this was the first thing we stepped into. And then we had the terrace.
- LE How you say you opened up the ceiling of the dining room?
- EW For Sukkos. And they used to put willow ~~logs~~ branches and pretty birds/~~made~~ out of eggs and paper. We used pretty papers for its tail and its head and all kinds of ~~things~~ we used to make out of paper. Colored paper to decorate the Sukkah.
- LE Did you decorate the Sukkah with birds?
- EW Well, we made it ourselves. I made it. ~~Sukkahsymbatx~~
- LE But the symbols is what I'm trying to get at. You didn't use fruit, vegetables.
- EW Yes, we had fruit. On the table and hanging up fruit.
- LE And then you had the willow branches covering up the top.
- EW And then we had grape vines all around the whole Sukkah. Beautiful grape vine.
- LE Therefore, if you celebrated Sukkah, you were a Jewish family? You considered yourself such. Now, was your father a pious man?
- EW Well, he kept the religion, but he was not a pious man. Not extreme.
- LE Let's see, there were two forms of Hungarian Jews. One were the ultra-Orthodox and then the other one was the "her..."something.
- EW Well, he was not Orthodox.
- LE He was more the modern?
- EW Yes.
- LE How how did that show itself? Did he wear a beard?
- EW He had a little Van Dyke.
- LE But not a full beard?
- EW No. And his moustache also was trimmed.
- LE Did he go to shul?
- EW Well, at holidays he might and sometimes he wouldn't.
- LE All right. If he did go to synagogue, what kind of synagogue would he go to?
- EW Well, we had only one synagogue, so he had to go to that.
- LE And that was what?
- EW I imagine it was an Orthodox synagogue.
- LE Was it in the town of Sereye?
- EW In the town, yes. A small synagogue. It was not many Jewish people, maybe it was five families.
- LE Five Jewish families?
- EW Five Jewish families, yes.
- LE Did you have a rabbi?
- EW No, we didn't have a rabbi. If they wanted a rabbi, he came from Batu. Or Sarkaso, there was two. Two little towns. On Thursday, when we had to kill our turkeys and geese and chickens, ~~Brevotn~~ was his name, the "shochet" used to come and kill the livestock.
- LE So your father was traditional enough that he had a shochet come...
- EW My mother was more... She was Hungarian born, yes.

religious

LB Was your father Hungarian born?

EW He was an Austrian.

LB What does that mean?

EW Well, he ~~was~~ spoke beautiful German.

LB Where did he come from?

EW He came from the border... I don't even remember.

LB Because Galicia was part of Austria too.

EW He doesn't come from Galida, no. <sup>1/2</sup> If I showed you a map... I don't have too much of Austria on the map...

EW - He grew up in Hungary though, after awhile, he became an orphan. In Aparsleb...

LB That's where he came from?

EW That's where he was when he was about 15 years old, he went there, or about 14. I remember him saying that he came there and that's where he stayed.

LB How that's a town in Hungary? Could you say it again and spell it for me?

EW My mother came from Medvezh . Eperjes.

LB An American would not spell it that way, so that's why I have to ask you to spell it. Now your father then settled in Eperjes...

EW Until they married... my mother, they met somewhere and they married.

LB And your mother came from Medvezh? Yes. And they met...

How if I'm not mistaken, I had another person who came from Medvezh but he claimed he was Russian born and you know the name of the Baal Shem Tov?

You know who the Baal Shem Tov was? You've heard of Hasidism?

EW I heard of them.

LB Now he claimed that the Baal Shem was buried in Medvezh. Now I don't know if that's the same town.

EW Well, there's not another Medvezh.

LB He said Medvezh.

EW That's not even Hungarian. ~~Magyar~~ Magyar is Hungarian. It means a certain fruit.

LB It's a cherry. But it's bigger than a cherry. It's a delicious fruit in Hungarian, in Hungary they had it. I never saw it here. Like a great big cherry you know. A large cherry, very sweet. Red. It's delicious. I never saw it here in this country.

LB Your mother then was more traditional. How did that show itself? Did she keep the Sabbath?

EW Yes. She lit the candles and the whole works, the whole works. Friday was beautiful. Friday night and Saturday. It was real holiday.

LB Did she come from an Orthodox family, your mother?

EW Well, evidently she did. My mother was an orphan too.

LB Your mother was an orphan too. So, you never knew your grandparents?

EW No.

LB So whatever you knew, you knew through what your parents told you. I understand, because that's how I grew up. Whatever I knew about my background, I was told.

EW It was so long ago. I never think back any more, I think of my mother and I think of my father but I don't think back of the days that I was home, I never think back.

LB No. Well, I hope you don't mind thinking back now.

EW No, I don't. I don't mind at all.

LB ~~How~~ How was there anything else about the life, after all, it sounds as if you came from a fairly well to do family, with right? Now how did it affect your life in particular?

EW I tell you, my father and mother, they, my older sisters, the fate, it was their fate that they are living. Because they didn't have to come to this country, my mother and father being that they were well off. But my older sister she got engaged to a gentleman that my father did not approve of. In Hungary.

LB May I ask why he did not approve?

EW I didn't know what happened because I wasn't there. I was born much later.

LB Oh, this was before you were born?

EW It was the eldest, that born. So he married, he married her. A beautiful, beautiful girl. It was a big party. It was related to me by my sisters. It was a big long table and the bridegroom and the bride were sitting there and he said something at the table that my father thought, "Oh, this is not for my daughter." And he said, "Out."

KM

LB Now, the bride and bridegroom were not your sister. It was some other party?

MH No, it was, my father and my mother made a big engagement party for...

LB For your sister and her prospective bridegroom?

MH Yes. And at the table this happened. And he told him to go and then next day my father wired to a brother of his, that he had, Uncle Morris, in New York, that he's going to send his daughter out, till she gets over this. And he did. But when she came here, of course she was very heartsick and she pulled all the brothers and sisters out.

LB Out of Hungary?

EW Out of Hungary. And you know, being in a village, they were all very happy to get out.

LB You were happy to get out?

EW They were happy to get out, to get into America. You know it's not life for a girl. We were five of us girls. And all the girls were pulled out and then the brothers went later. So, I remember my mother packing the big steamer trunk, all the time, with <sup>clothes</sup> for the girls, send it to them, and one by one, they all came out. And then I was left alone with my two parents, with my parents. And my mother cried all the time. She <sup>didn't</sup> want to come to her children. She doesn't care. Sell it if you can. If you can't don't sell it. Anyway, they got rid of a lot of stuff, a lot of land and we packed up and we came. That was in 1921.

LB Now you were born in 1900 and you came in 1921. You were 21 years old. A lot of things happened during those years.

MH Yes, a lot of things happened. Northy came...

LB Now, let's go back first because Northy came later. Now, in 1914 the first World War started. All right, now what do you remember about the first World War?

MH Well, I remember about the Germans coming. And my father also had a general store, that everything, you know, everything... And I heard those Germans coming and saying "Der fluchte Jude"

LB It means what? What's a "fluchte Jude"?

MH The cursed Jew, and that increased my mind.

LB Now this was in the first World war now?

MH The first world war, yes. They were very arrogant. And they took our prettiest rooms.

LB They commandeered the house then?

MH Yes, they took our prettiest rooms. And my mother used to hide me, <sup>which was</sup> in a little house somewhere, ~~KXOMM~~

LB You just said that in Hungarian? That's all right, I just wanted to know what language? ~~MH - Mehi means aunt. But we called everybody mehi. The older~~

MH Well, anyway and then the Romanish came, but they....

LB Romanish?

MH Roumanians, but they were brutal. Very cruel.

LB They were worse than the Germans?

MH The Germans were bad enough, but they were not as ruthless as the Roumanians were. I saw it from passing out. Because father wouldn't let us stay home. My brother Eugene and Josef were there. The three of us were the youngest ones. And they had to hide us. But we did see that the the Shorks, Mr. and Mrs. Shork and their daughters, they took <sup>swickers</sup> and beat them on the street.

*people are called neve or backi. The man is called backi.*

LB For what reason?

MB Well, because they were cruel, we had to do...and my father...

LB Were these people yours?

LB They were Jews, you.

LB Well, were they beaten by the Hungarians because they were Jews?

MB I don't know, why they were beaten. They just...whatever they wanted, we had to give them. Because otherwise they would shoot you or kill you and that was the First World War. That was no fight over there, they just came and invaded, the little town.

LB Do you remember what part of the war, what year that was?

MB That was in the war time, 1914 or 19...I don't know exactly what year it was. I remember they came and we had so two beautiful white horses and they took those two horses and loaded up the wagon with all the oats and wheat and corn and everything and we had a *Wagoner* and they emptied things that they could take. Father wouldn't say a word, we just let them. And if they came into the house, mother just would give them anything that they wanted. They just take it.

LB Now let me see if I can clarify something for myself. Actually the Germans were allies of the Hungarians. Is that correct?

MB Yes. But they didn't hurt us. They only took things.

LB They took. This is what I don't know. The Romanians were not even a nation at that time.

MB The Romanian soldiers...they were in the war somehow. They came into our town.

LB My question is were they part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire?

MB (husband)Romania was in existence as a country way, way before. Romania, Roumania, Hungary was actually a state from the Austro-Hungary.

LB So Romania was a country?

MB Absolutely. Their own government. Their own ruling. Their own king and everything else. The only thing, they were allies at the beginning with Germany.

LB So they came in also as allies, but they commandeered everything anyway.

MB But the Germans came first. And the Germans went away. And then the Romanians came in. The Romanians, they were brutal. They were really brutal. And I was more afraid than the others, and my mother too, than the Germans. The Germans were, they did say this word "fluchte Jude" as they came in. There was nobody there. But I heard it. But the Romanians were, why they were terrible. They came into the house, my mother said, and someone was sleeping someplace, the young boy, and Josef together, and she was so afraid that they'll go into that room. They were just brutal. They were bad people. I don't know why they did that. And that Mr. and Mrs. Shtark, Shtark that was their name, they also were the landowners and evidently when they went in there to take things they didn't want to give and maybe they put up some kind of opposition and on the street they were beating them...I remember that.

LB You know, the commandeering I can understand. Most of the Jews we have spoken to, those who lived in Galicia where the Germans eventually occupied them, that part of Galicia, or in certain parts of Poland when Russian Galicia, if

in

you know the towns like Tarnau...those who were occupied by the Germans said, that they were strict but that they were correct. That there was no disorder permitted. If there were rations, everyone, Jew, Christian, everyone received the same ration. There was no differentiation between anyone. They may not have been kind, but they were correct.

MB Well, I don't know about that. And I'm not saying anything but about the Germans. I told you that they were beautiful looking people. And they were not...they didn't do what the Romanians did. But I did hear this one officer say... So, I hated them for that.

LB Now what else do you remember about the war itself? It lasted, in Hungary, till 1918, right? And you were growing up. You were 18 years old by the time

- the war ended. What were you doing, during those war years? Did you go to school?
- MM No, I was home.
- LB You were home?
- MM But we didn't have the soldiers there all the time. They just went through. They would maybe stay for five, six days.
- MM Did you ever have the Hossians occupy you?
- MM No. But they went through. It must have been that they were on their way to the front. And they settled in the little town for a few days. Or for the most, a week. And then they went away. And ~~thereby~~ we only heard the gun shot. From the Carpathian mountains, where they all...
- LB So you were just south of the Carpathian mountains? And that is your only direct contact with the war?
- MM That is the only direct contact we had.
- LB Did you ever have refugees coming into your village?
- MM Yes, refugees came and they were looking for food.
- LB Where did they come from?
- MM From Poland. Even from Poland we had people come, young girls, young...
- LB Even from Poland... where else did they come from?
- MM They were all talking a different language. But the Jewish people we could they talked Jewish too. B
- LB Did you speak Yiddish at home?
- MM Well sure, I understood something. I never spoke fluently Jewish but I heard my mother speak sometimes.
- LB Your mother did speak Yiddish?
- MM Yes, she did speak Yiddish. But not like here, like the Russians, that they speak all the time Yiddish. She spoke most of the time in Hungarian. That was the language.
- LB She was an orphan. You don't know what her parents were then, where they came from?
- MM Kedvezh.
- LB They came from Kedvezh. That's why I'm wondering about that Kedvezh.
- MM The refugees I remember coming. We even had two lovely girls in our house. We had them for a long time. I think she came from Poland, to our house. She stayed there quite a long time. And there was refugees that came into the town.
- LB What was the reaction of your family to the refugees?
- MM They were very nice to them.
- LB They were nice to them. Did they look on them as beings from another planet? as strangers?
- MM No, no.
- LB You know, this happened. Especially if people came from Eastern Europe/ into... Sider →
- MM There was this one girl, that she had a sweet sweetheart, that I was talking about and she, they wanted to get married and they had no place to go, nowhere, and they had no one. So my mother took them in and they were there a few weeks and ~~she~~ gave them a room and then mother made a nice wedding for them.
- LB Now this was the Polish refugee. Was she a Jew?
- MM Yes, Jewish.
- LB Now, how did Jews find you in a small town? Did you know you were Jews?
- MM I don't know how they found us, but they found us. There were others too. There was a ~~Wetman~~ Feldman. He was very wealthy too. And the Shtarks. That was the wealthiest in the little town. They were our big landowners.
- LB Would you have called your village a shtetl?
- MM No.
- LB Who else... was it mostly Hungarians living there?
- MM All Hungarians.
- LB Peasants?
- MM Peasants. Sure.



LB What were the relations between these five Jewish families and the Hungarian peasants?

EW There were other two Jewish families too. They were poor, I remember Mr. Ungar was poor and other families...

LB It was good relationship. Good relationship between the Jews and the Hungarian peasants.

EW Yes.

LB You didn't have any feeling of anti-Semitism or incidents or anything of that kind?

EW Well, we did have incidents. It's a long story. I don't know if you want to hear it. This was like a war, this was in our house. It was before the war, or I don't remember. All I know is that it happened. It was an incident. This drunken man came in. He said "Do you want a bullet?" to my father, or to the bartender. We had also a "wet house"...

LB A what?

EW A wet house. That they sold liquor. A tavern. But they didn't really drink there much. Only maybe somebody came in and got a shot of liquor. But this man came already, this Gentile man, all drunk, a Hungarian, and he said "do you want a bullet?" And my father said, he gave him a shot in the nose.

LB He punched him.

EW He punched him. Well, he got very angry and wants to kill the Jew. And it was winter time and on a Thursday night. I never forget it because... mother had... and the girls were home, ~~my~~ my sisters, and they were making the bread and the "milchake" and the "pareve" and all the...

LB So your mother kept a kosher home?

EW She kept a kosher home. ~~And as they were making this the night before, the kvas, that's the yeast, that's why it tasted so delicious. Because they made a part of it, a certain amount for raising for the next day to make the dough. It was so delicious because of this...they used hops and they used bran and they used yeast. It tasted delicious anyway. So anyway, they were making this and in the general store, my brother Nat was in there and this <sup>(name)</sup> ~~guy~~ came in that's the man, and he wanted to kill him.~~ And as they were making this the night before, the kvas, <sup>MOVES</sup> the for the bread the next day to be made. That's the yeast, that's why it tasted so delicious. Because they made a part of it, a certain amount for raising for the next day to make the dough. It was so delicious because of this...they used hops and they used bran and they used yeast. It tasted delicious anyway. So anyway, they were making this and in the general store, my brother Nat ~~was~~ was in there and this <sup>(name)</sup> ~~guy~~ came in that's the man, and he wanted to kill him.

LB What was his name?

EW Supo Gabor. That's a real Hungarian name. My brother took a weight from the janitor, you know those ~~kind~~ <sup>kind</sup> iron and hit him with it. And blood gushing. Well, oh my. There was no window left in our house. It was all broken up.

LB Who broke the windows, the gentleman? *five drunk*

EW Well, he had brothers and he had friends that came. They came back and my sisters, my brothers, they had to hide. Because the males are the ones that they wanted to kill. So my brave sisters and my mother and I was holding my father down in the middle room where nobody could even find that room. But he was going to go out there. He was afraid that they were going to do harm to his children. Anyway, I held on to him and I cried and I wouldn't let him up. Well, finally this was over about 12 o'clock at night. But, oh, I'll never forget. I got so nervous, I was a nervous wreck after that.

LB How old were you when that happened?

EW Oh, I don't know exactly. But I know I really wasn't very much grown because maybe 9 years old, 10 years old.

LB So, it was before the war and it sounds like one of those isolated instances where somebody gets drunk and decides to pick on a Jew. Right? *heard*

EW Yes. Yes. Then it was a Jew. Right. But after that, whenever ~~somebody~~ <sup>heard</sup> somebody sings like a drunkard on the street, I would go baywire. I don't know. Frightened that they shouldn't come in there. And then my sister, Annie, she had a beautiful dress. A very lovely navy blue dress, and my mother sent me for

*Handwritten note:* And...  
*Handwritten note:* heard

eggs in the ~~fridge~~ and my sister said, Bring me the dress. She had hung it up to clean or something. And I had the dress on my back and the eggs in the other and when I heard Sape Gabor singing I ... (claps hands together)

LB Oh, you broke the eggs on the dress.

MM On the dress.

LB This was after the incident?

MM After the incident. Well you know you get scared, when it's a war in our house. So that's the only bad thing that I remember.

LB In general, then relationships were pretty good.

MM Yes. Father was well respected in the city. But this was an incident that created a war. And the whole gang came and broke up the house.

LB Now, tell me, when the war came, did your brothers have to go into the army?

MM No. They weren't old enough.

LB They were not old enough. All right. By the time the war ended in 1918 and Austria Hungary lost the war. If I remember correctly there was an interim communist government. Bela Kun came, in 1919, is that correct?

MM Well, Bela Kun was with my brother.

LB What does that mean?

MM They were together. They went to the University together, in school and they had political ideas the same.

LB Now tell me about your brother. Where did he go to school?

MM He went to school in Budapest. He was a schoolmate of Bela Kun. But he was almost, almost he got the doctoral degree in rabbinical. When he was six years old he was sent away to the Solovay, to study. And he studied till he was, I don't know how old, but he was...but after that, he became an attorney, he got a doctor's degree and he was with Bela Kun.

LB So he became a Communist?

MM Oh yes, A Socialist, I thought at that time.

LB He was a socialist.

MM And they put him in Horthy time...

LB Now wait a minute, let's get through the Bela Kun because that was an interesting period although I don't know too much about it.

MM That was a period when socialism...it was no Communism at that time. It was socialism. And Bela Kun and my brother they were colleagues, with others. And...

LB Did they stage a coup, in Hungary, in Budapest?

MM A coup?

LB A coup. You know, a government, military...

MM Well, that came with Horthy.

LB But before Horthy, how did Kun assume control?

MM Well, the socialists assumed control. How did they? I don't know how they did it. I was in the little city. But they did govern. They did govern.

LB And your brother, whose name was, what?

MM Samuel Roth.

LB And he was a colleague of Bela Kun. Now, Kun did not last too long.

MM No, he died. I think he fell off from some...he got killed, yes.

LB Do you remember who killed him?

MM No. All I know, my brother was arrested.

LB By whom?

MM By Horthy.

LB Horthy replaced Bela Kun. The government lasted how long, do you remember?

MM Not very long. A very short time.

LB I wish I knew more Hungarian history. I'm ashamed.

MM Well, I'm long away from there but in Horthy time it was very very bad.

LB Now, who was Horthy, would you explain please.

MM Horthy was like Hitler.

LB Whom did he represent?

MM The fascist right wing.

LB And he was Hungarian?

- LB Yes he was Hungarian. (Lizabeth interrupts but is inaudible) Herthy took over, but I want to go back to the incident, because my father was a very brilliant man and he didn't want an attorney. He was his own attorney. And they had to go to the big city, to ... Borsosa where there was a county seat
- LB You're going to have to spell the name of the city.
- NW Borsosa. And my father went there for the trial...
- LB Of this man...?
- NW Of this man, because he was hit by my brother, and this they used my father. And so when the trial was my father defended himself and he had many many witnesses, this man, so after the trial was over, it lasted about a week...
- LB Wait, who had the witnesses, the Sabors?
- NW The Sabors had a lot of witnesses. My father didn't have any witnesses, just the children...the family. However, after the trial was over for a long time it lasted, the judge said, "Xat whether it was Mr. Rosenbaum or the young Rosenbaum that did it, they were right." and dismissed the case.
- LB So this was a Hungarian judge, now, non-Jew? Am I correct? Who gave this verdict?
- NW Yes, Yes. Y,a. And that was pretty nice. And he congratulated my father for the beautiful defense, now he, without, not being an attorney...
- LB But actually, would it be correct then to say that a Jew could go to the Hungarian courts and receive some justice?
- NW Yes. Yes. Definitely.
- LB And you did not have, or did you have, I'll put the question this way...Did you have what they had for example in Poland...they almost had governments within governments where the Jews were governed by their own...kehillas?
- NW We didn't have that. Oh, you mean maybe they go to the rabbi...
- LB Well, but there was an organization, a hierarchical set-up, where they had that. Within the limits of Jewish law they were governed by their own people. When a question arose where there was a dispute, let's say, between a Christian and a (sic) non-Jew, then they might have to go to a civil authority, a non-Jewish authority, but for the most part they were governed by their Jewish authorities.
- NW I don't know anything about this.
- LB In Hungary.
- NW I never heard of it.
- LB And ~~xxxxxx~~ you were 21 when you left, I should imagine you would have heard something. All right now, your brother was arrested...
- NW And he was in jail for ...~~xxx~~ Ljhel...
- LB That's where he was imprisoned?
- NW That's where he was imprisoned. At the time when Bela Kun got killed and everything that's the time it was.
- LB Was he put on trial, your brother?
- NW No, I don't know what happened. We came to this country.
- LB Did you leave your brother there in prison?
- NW Yes, but we knew we had good connec...and he got out.
- LB He got out of jail?
- NW He got out of jail, somehow by some miracle. I don't know, my father was working on it, and he got out of jail and he sent him tickets and he came over.
- LB No care to the United States?
- NW Before we came to this country, he knew already that my brother was going to be let out.
- LB He knew.
- NW He knew.
- LB There was quite an upheaval in Europe after the first World War...
- NW They almost killed him, yes...

- 2.5. And there was quite some unrest in Hungary during this period. Now, was your family affected at all?
- 14 No, we weren't affected.
- 15 In this village? You didn't know what was going on? Were you politically minded at all?
- 16 Very.
- 17 You were. Were you a socialist also?
- 18 Yes.
- 19 Now how did you get involved in this socialist bit? You say you were didn't go to school, you lived in a small village?
- 20 Well, I don't know. I read a lot. My brother fed me with literature, when he came home from Budapest I had more books to read than any... I read an awful lot.
- 21 Tell me what you read.
- 22 All kinds of things. Anything.
- 23 Did you read Marx?
- 24 ~~Yes~~ Yes.
- 25 Did you read Lenin?
- 26 Well, I knew about Lenin, but wasn't more mostly socialist. You know. Of course, Marx. And then again hearing him talk. He gave lectures.
- 27 Oh, he did? In the village?
- 28 Oh, all over. Those peasants were, everyone...
- 29 He lectured the peasants?
- 30 He lectured all over. He was a educator. He was a fiery speaker. He was just ~~being~~ every stone he could to make them socialists.
- 31 And so he worked on his family too? And he succeeded with at least, with you?
- 32 You know I have a brother that's coming in here now. He is a very staunch communist, ...but Joe...
- 33 How did your father feel about this?
- 34 But Joe, my brother... it's funny, not all my sisters, only me and Joseph. And the rest of them...
- 35 How old was Joseph?
- 36 Joseph is just a year difference. Almost the same age.
- 37 So the two youngest ones were influenced?
- 38 The youngest one was not influenced, Eugene was not influenced. And Rose was not influenced and Mia was not influenced and none of them was influenced except Joseph and me.
- 39 And this brother, Samuel? And what was his position in the family? What number? Was he number one? number two?
- 40 Sam was the second born.
- 41 The second born, first came the sister who had the unhappy love affair, then came Sam. And Sam was the one who introduced socialism into the family.
- 42 That's right.
- 43 How did your father feel about this?
- 44 Well, my father was already open minded. They had friction between my him and my brother. He said, Give up the thing. You don't need all this and it's not right. But my father was very nice to his people that worked for him.
- 45 That's different from having a son who's associated with Bela Kun, in an uprising.
- 46 Well, they were, there were frictions. Yes. Really, there was tensions. There was fiery talks.
- 47 Was it sufficient to cause a rupture between the two? The father and the sons?
- 48 Well, it wasn't. Because after, he really left everything there. He sold a couple of houses. And he sold some other land. And he brought over money. He did bring money over, here. My father. And he sent brother Sam and I the \$12,900. We sold the house to a man that was working in Pittsburg. And his wife bought the house.
- 49 In Hungary?

MS In Hungary? His man from Litchburg, Ohio ( ) was his name, he brought the money to my sister and my brother in Canton, Ohio. And then I wrote the letter to Ida that they should buy us a house. That it's enough for all of us. So they bought a gorgeous home on 310 Arlington Ave., Canton, Ohio.

LB How did they get to Canton, Ohio?

MS That's where my brother went in Ohio. That's where he was and then Ida was in New York and she lost her husband so she came to Canton, too. And my brother opened up a men's shop so they were both of them in there, working.

LB All right, now I think we're getting ahead of the next story. What I want to know, is, if... I'll recapitulate, O.K.? I'll go back. I'll try to summarize, a little bit. During the war, you say, you were actually, you didn't feel any effect of the war at all...

MS Except hearing the...

LB Except hearing the gunshot and the week or two of first the Germans and then the Roumanians, soldiers being quartered.

MS That's all that we know about.

LB Right? After the war, when Esia Kun took over was your village affected at all?

MS No, No. There was no ~~reason~~ to know...

LB Were any of the girls sent to the University or to the gymnas?

MS Well, my brothers were sent to the gymnasium. They were all... but the girls, no.

LB None of the girls. Did you receive any formal education?

MS No, No formal education.

LB Therefore, in a sense, your brother Samuel was your teacher.

MS Yes, Yes. He was my teacher.

LB What other reading... You had to learn to read. Who taught you to read?

MS Oh yes. I did go to the fourth grade.

LB Oh well, all right. Well, I wanted to know that. You did go to fourth grade? Where did you go to fourth grade?

MS Right in the little town. It was a school there.

LB And in what language was the school...

MS Hungarian.

LB It was conducted in Hungarian? And did you learn history and geography?

MS Yes, some Hungarian history.

LB You learned Hungarian history in ~~town~~ *town and geography.*

MS But I don't remember it any more. *Kissac & Byes* I remember and some poems I could recite beautifully but I, it's been so long that I, first of all I didn't ever have a chance to talk Hungarian. I don't know anybody Hungarian.

LB Come to Schenectady.

MS I really don't have any Hungarian friends or anything to open my mouth for Hungarian.

LB Well, as you were growing up, for example, you said you read Marx. Did you read him in Hungarian?

MS In Hungarian. He didn't give me a very deep Marxist book. But he brought me pamphlets and he brought ~~many~~ books to read. He wanted me to read Dickens and he wanted me to read those things, for, you know, things like that.

LB Well, no, tell me, I didn't realize that you read Dickens in Hungarian?

MS Dickens in Hungarian. Yes.

LB All of Dickens?

MS No, not all of Dickens but I read Dickens in Hungarian and he brought me...

LB Well, did you read the Russians?

MS Well, about the Russians. I know all about the Russians. He used to bring me books, I used to read and then...

LB What do you mean, you know all about the Russians?

57 Well, from reading, I read everything I could get a hold of. From the Revolution.

58 I don't remember what I had.

59 You knew about the Kerensky revolution?

60 Yes, the Menshevik and the Bolshevik and the Kerensky... Kerensky is a Menshevik. And I knew about the Revolution, I knew about all those things because I was very interested in that.

61 You were following the progress, then, of the Revolution in the Soviet Union?

62 Yes, Yes.

63 Or Russia which became the Soviet Union?

64 Yes, Yes.

65 And your sympathies were with the Bolsheviks?

66 That's right.

67 From the beginning?

68 From the beginning.

69 Is that correct?

70 A socialist becomes a communist.

71 No, no. Not all. I mean, after all, after Lenin's death...but of course that took place after you left.

72

73 (husband) Trotsky was another communist.

74 Trotsky was not a communist. He was well, he died here in South America somewhere.

75 He died. He was killed in Mexico.

76 He was killed?

77 He was murdered in Mexico.

78 I wondered why they murdered him? He was...

79 Because Stalin couldn't stand him. He murdered everyone of his family, his grandchildren, as far as I recall.

80 Well, I don't know...

81 And then he finally had Trotsky murdered too. (pause)

82 I remember the time...that I remember...

83 He was hacked...he was hatched to death.

84 Oh my goodness. Well we don't know who did it.

85 Yes, we do. I'm pretty sure his name was Zborowski. (Long pause) Its in... there's a three volume work on Trotsky by a ~~man~~ man ~~as~~ named, if I'm not mistaken, Isaac Deutscher, and it's called, if you want a little propaganda, I couldn't even finish the third volume, because it was so upsetting to me, it's called something about ... "The prophet armed" ... It's something, three volumes having to do with the prophet, and Trotsky...it has to do with Trotsky and Stalin. The Prophet Disarmed, I can't remember the three titles. But it's a three volume set, a trilogy on Trotsky's career and life and it's by a man called Isaac Deutscher. Very interesting.

86 I do believe you have read it and I don't know what you think of it. There is books written now, about Nixon, that they paint him white. Lily white, how that goes down in posterity. A person has to be a judge of who and what and the same with Trotsky. I don't know that much about ... I know that Trotsky wanted something that they didn't want but believe me, you don't know, it has to be historians to really know which is right and which is wrong.

87 I'm not arguing for anything. I'm just saying that if you were interested you might want to read these ~~three volumes~~.

88 I wish I could. I can't read now, my eyes...four eyes and this...I have a cataract and I can't read. I can't read, I can see everything, I can drive. But at night.

And it bothers me. So, I can't read at all. If I want to read, my eyes get so tired.

89 Yes. Well, anyway, where were we? We're back in, the way you were educated and wanted to hear what your reading was. You read Dickens in Hungarian. Did you read anything like Shakespeare, ever?

90 Shakespeare, just plays. *Certain plays.*

91 Well, yes. You did read. In Hungarian. Now who gave them to you to read?

MI My brother,

LE Your brother, U.S., what else did you read? For example, if you read any of the Russians, which Russians did you read?

MI Well I used to like... There is translation in Hungarian even Dostoevsky and Chekhov and Gogol and all those. AM Yes, I did read a lot of it. I have it in English too, but in Hungarian I used to read it.

LE So you read all this before you even left Hungary?

MI Before I left Hungary I read a lot of Hungarian books.

LE And you followed the Revolution in the Soviet Union?

MI Yes, I did.

LE I'm sort of summarizing again. And you were definitely pro-Bolshevik?

MI Yes. Maybe I shouldn't admit that...

LE No, we're not going anywhere with these tapes.

MI Well, I was a socialist. Call it a socialist.

LE All right. Listen, at that time many people were pro-Bolshevik

MI Well, we were socialist. It started that way, socialism.

LE These tapes are not going anywhere. (Scrambled conversation.)

MI Boy! I'm gonna go to jail.

LE No.

MI (Speaks from the other side of the room) So what. Free lunch.

LE He said you'll have free lunch. Excuse me. So, what I want...but were you yourself politically active? In Hungary? After all, here's your brother running around.

MI I lectured just like he did.

LE That's what I wanted to know.

MI And I lecture even now. If I start talking to somebody, I keep talking about things. I just can't help it, you know. I used to talk to all those peasants.

I was always out there amongst them and talking about those things.

LE Now, what were lecturing for? What were you agitating for? Were you agitating for...

MI I was agitating for that they have to work so hard and they get so little for return and there is millionaires...and, you know, socialism.

LE Yes, but socialism where? In Hungary?

MI In Hungary.

LE So you were agitating for the Socialist revolution in Hungary?

MI I didn't say, Have a revolution. I just told them what I feel. (Laughs). I just told them how I feel.

LE Well, did you want a revolution?

MI Well, they had it. But many years later, I didn't make the revolution.

LE No! No.

MI But they had it, yes. Many years later.

LE Were there any party cadres?

MI What is this?

MI Socialist party - cadres - cells?

MI Not in that village. Not in that little town.

LE Not where you were.

MI No. But I was trying to enlighten them. Trying to, what little I knew, I was trying to tell them about it. That was my activity. How could I be active when I wasn't allowed to go alone anywhere? We were - girls - and we were, not to be touched.

LE Now tell me about how women were treated, especially in a Jewish family, Jewish Hungarian family, between 1900 and 1921 in Hungary? Did things change at all, for example, after the war? As far as women were concerned in Hungary?

MI No! It was the same thing.

LB All right, now what was it like?

MW I don't know, I had it nice.

LB For yourself, I mean, what was your position? You were not allowed to go anywhere unchaperoned, you say.

MW Well, mother wouldn't have liked it, and my father wouldn't have liked it if I would go anywhere. I say had to know all the time where I was and what I was doing. Yes, I could <sup>go</sup>... Well, I never would. Because I... it was just like that. You get used to those things. And it didn't even bother me.

LB And there was no question of sending the girls away to school.

MW No, if they would have wanted to I think mother and father would not let us go out in the big city, girls. They sent the boys, but not the girls.

LB What they, what kind of a future did they have... they must have had something

End of Side 2

Side 3 000

MW I don't know what you mean by... whose daughters?

LB Your parents had a certain... for example, they sent your brothers to the University in Budapest.

MW That's right, to gymnasium and university.

LB To gymnasium and to the university. And they were well ~~able~~ able to afford it from what I understand. Yes, how many daughters were there?

MW Five of us.

LB Five. None of the daughters went to gymnasium. None of them went to the university.

MW No.

LB What kind of life picture ~~had~~ did your parents have in mind for their daughters?

MW Marriage.

LB Marriage and...

MW They were groomed for marriage, yes. All of them.

LB How were you groomed for marriage? What were you taught?

MW Well, my mother used to say to me, and I don't know what she said to the others because I was there alone. She said, You may have ~~some~~ <sup>money</sup>, you may have a very nice life, but you must know how to do it. How to do everything in the home.

LB Now, what did she teach you?

MW She taught me everything. She put a little foot stool on me and I had to make, I made the noodles, I made the creplach and the pastries and the... and she made me make the <sup>...and</sup> and I liked it anyway evidently, but I loved to be in the kitchen. And she did have two women that cooked too.

LB She had help?

MW She had help, yes.

LB What kind of help did she have?

MW Well, she had two women and when it was Thursday they were ~~with~~ cooking and cleaning the chickens and the turkeys and it was a big household.

LB Were these women Jews that helped her?

MW Yes...

LB They were Jewish women?

MW ~~Not~~ <sup>Not</sup> wasn't Jewish but Ethel was Jewish and another lady.

LB Did they live in with you or did they come...

MW No, they come in. They just came in. No not everyday. Just Thursday, Friday. Whenever there was a lot of...

LB What did the Jewish women do? Most homes, if they had maids, did not have Jews for help. Jewish homes...

MW They had Gentile help. We had any kind. We had Gentile or Jewish.

LB But you did have Jewish help.

MW Yes, we had Jewish help for the cooking, yes.

LB For the cooking. But none of them lived in?

MW No. The family, there was two families that worked for us, their wife was



was always at our house. She helped clean and wash.

LB This is the non-Jewish woman?

MW Yes that was Kota

LB Now she was there every day then?

MW Every day she came.

LB You're saying that the Thursday preparation was...

MW Because there was a lot of geese and chickens.

LB But where were they going? Were they sold?

MW No, for us.

LB This was for the Friday, for the Shabbat?

MW For the Friday, for the week.

LB For the next week?

MW Friday, Saturday, for the week.

LB For the next week?

MW For the week, yes.

LB So, every Thursday the cooking was done for the whole week?

MW No, no. But they had to clean all those, "flick" them all and all those turkeys and things and then they cooked for Shabbos and then they, and then all week long they just kept the thing for the whole week and they cooked every day sometimes.

LB Where was food kept? For example, where would you keep a turkey so that it wouldn't spoil? *For a week.*

MW Well we had a very deep well, I remember. And it was very cold in it. And they put it down in there. They let it down in the very deep well and that's where...

LB So that's where the fowl were kept, that were plucked on Thursday.

MW And in winter time they killed so many because the chimney, those great big chimneys you know, that would be full of "beilig"...

LB What's "beilig"?

MW The breast of the goose and the leg of the goose, smoked and you never ate anything so delicious in your life.

LB How do you spell that, "beilig"?

MW Well, that's the breast of the goose.

BW That's a Jewish, a Yiddish word.

LB I never heard it.

MW It's the breast of the goose, and the legs. They were always smoked. And we had, oh so many of them, and they were so delicious.

LB And where were they kept?

MW Well, just like if you dry something, you kept it outside and it will not get spoiled. But it was smoked. I remember it was salted and paprika on it and they were hung up there on the chimney. They take them down, just like smoked fishes. It was very delicious. Winter time.

LB So, you were taught to cook. Were you taught to sew?

MW Well, sewing, no. We had, never, mother <sup>didn't</sup> wanted us to sew. She says, You can always get a seamstress in for a week or two or three weeks and they do all your sewing for you.

LB So she envisioned that life would continue on its normal course, /the way it always had been.

MW Well that's the way it was there.

LB Nobody foresaw what was going to happen.

MW No.

LB Even with the revolution in the Soviet Union, in Russia going on, did anybody understand what was happening or after the war was lost, did people have any apprehension about the future?

MW Well, I don't know what people you're talking about. My people, my mother and father? Well, they didn't, my father maybe saw it, but he never philosophized... I don't remember him saying much about it. He read the paper all the time.

BW Can I ask you a question?

LB But we won't hear you. (Tape turned off momentarily.)

...  
LB Put politically, you see, here his son, we're talking about your father... his son, his oldest son, his second born child and his oldest son turns from rabbinical study  
MW He was the second, yes.  
LB He turns from rabbinical study into an active, working, agitating socialist. With Hela Kun. And Beia Kun is killed. I mean, that's no small matter. He's not fooling around with peanuts, your brother. He's right in the middle. And then he's put into jail...  
MW Well, he was in danger of his life. We were very frightened.  
LB All right. And at that point did your parents express anything of concern, now this was 1919-1920...  
MW Oh, they were so concerned.  
LB About his, I understand. I'm talking about the future.  
MW About the future? I never heard them being worried about it? The future. They never worried about the future. They worried about the children and they wanted to come to this country. My father...  
LB Oh, they did?  
MW And, it's a good thing they did. Because we would have been allkilled.  
LB Did your father ever say why he wanted to come to this country?  
MW He wanted to be with his children.  
LB That was his reason?  
MW That was his reason.  
LB He never expressed a political reason?  
MW No.  
LB Your mother, you already said, wanted to be with her children.  
MW Well, and my father loved my mother and wanted to do what she wanted to do. And I'm sure he loved his children and the children loved him.  
LB So, that's how you came to the United States?  
MW Yes, that's right.  
LB Now, did you come, you came in 1921 when Horthy...did I get that right, was Horthy still in power?  
MW Yes, he was still in power. But he fell then. He fell then. Your remember Boris? (To her husband) I don't remember exactly, but I know when my brother was released, Horthy was already out. ~~Maybe~~ He wouldn't let my brother go out.  
LB That's what I was wondering. Unless your father bribed someone.  
LMW Well, I don't know if he could bribe, but I know he did everything in his power ~~it~~ to get his son out.  
LB Surely.  
MW And when he, when my brother came, Horthy was already down. I'm sure that my father did...I know that  
LB Are you sure, that would be only about two years that he would have been in power? Then who replaced Horthy?  
MW Then there was a, don't you remember, there was a revolution and the Soviet Army went into Hungary, but this was...  
LB In 1921?  
MW No, not then. Not then. In 1921, Horthy was there.  
EW MW My brother came out in 1922.  
LB Do you remember what happened after 1922, because I do not...  
MW Well, I was in this country so I don't know what happened there. All I know that my brother came to this country and how, it was not easy I imagine. Because when he came here, we were all just very very happy. Lucky to see him, ~~alone~~.

LB Now when you left, you and your mother and father...anybody else?

Just the three of you? What about your younger brother?

MW Oh, they were all out. They sent them all out.

LB So you were the only one that stayed. How come you were the one that stayed?

Because your brother was younger than you?

MW Well, because, I don't know. I guess they didn't send me and I guess I didn't want to go.

LB Not want to go.

MW Not to leave my parents. No, I wouldn't go.

EW You didn't have a younger brother.

MW Eugene was my younger brother.

LB Now, when you left Hungary, did you leave on a regular passport or did you have to smuggle yourself out?

MW No. We had a regular passport.

LB You had a regular passport. But you had affidavits from the United States?

LMW Yes. Everything. It was a beautiful second class.

LB Actually you came with quite some money, relatively, at your disposal? You came comfortably?

MW Very comfortably. Beautiful trip.

LB You didn't come steerage?

MW What's that?

LB Ah! You didn't come that way. All right, that's the way the East Europeans came, in bunks, one on top of the other. With no facilities.

MW No. It was beautiful.

LB All right.

MW It was very nice trip and I haven't been on a boat since. I'd love to go.

LB Now let me see. I'm going to try and introduce something which I didn't hear about last night and I do not know if you were connected with this or not. When Mr. Wexler went to the Soviet Union, in 1932,...

MW 1931. In 1931 you went back, no?

LB Well, that picture was taken in 1932. (Picture on the wall showing a group of people from a factory in the Soviet Union.)

EW The picture was taken in 1932, she's right, but I was there before.

LB Well, what year was it that you went back?

EW I went there in 1931.

LB Mr. Wexler went in 1931. Did you go with him then?

MW No, I didn't know him.

LB I see. So this is a second marriage. All right. Well, then I cannot ask you any questions about that.

MW That was an interesting time for him.

LB Let us finish what we have here. I'm going to shut this tape off a minute...

MW You can never outgrow it...

LB Your childhood.

MW That sheltered life. You never feel like you can let go, you know. Just, I don't know. I can't explain it. You always, sort of, feel timid.

LB You feel timid?

MW Feel timid.

LB Well, maybe then that politicalization, this is just conversation, was your outlet for the other feelings that you were not allowed to express.

MW Yes. Yes. Yes. Well, I don't know whether, it's ~~quite~~ so long ago.

LB After all, that's quite a difference from the sheltered life, and marriage and feeding the family with geese and so on, that your parents had in view for you. For you to go and lecture the peasants on the merits of socialism.

MW I was on my brother's side.

(General laughter)

I want to tell you something. When he lectured, when he talked, he talked such fine. He was such a flowy talker. With big beautiful eyes. And I swallowed every word he said. I thought so much of him. He was a brilliant, brilliant man.

Just brilliant. Of course...

LB So, your whole family got out of Hungary?

MW Yes, all of us. We had a friend, Mr. and Mrs. Kestenbaum. They had fourteen children and many of them already married and had children and well, the oldest boy, I liked him very much. I never knew such a...but I was such a child... anyway, but I did like him. He wanted to come to this country. He made three or four attempts to come out. He had passports. Everything. And his father took him back with gendarmes. He didn't want him to go, in a "treife" country. Did you ever hear of such a thing? And the boy got killed. The whole family got wiped out...

LB When was this? You mean when... *in the 2nd World War?*

MW In Hitler time, yes. And had he come, he would have been alive.

LB Well, who knows what's good luck and what's bad luck. It's too bad.

MW Yes, but anyway all of them were wiped out.

LB That was a terrible time for Hungarian Jews. Terrible.

MW Well, it's a good thing that we came here.

LB It was just a fluke, as we say in America.

MW Accidentally. Accidentally. It was my sister, the first one. None of us would have come out,

LB Well, I'm glad. Now let me turn this off again.  
(Tape off)

LB You had such a large family. By what year were all your sisters gone?  
How old were you? When all your sisters were already gone?

MW Oh gosh, I don't know.

LB Roughly.

MW They came home for a visit, I remember.

LB No, I want to know, for example, whom you played with.

MW Who I played with?

LB Yes, who were your friends?

MW The little peasant girls, I played with.

LB You did?

MW And I had two Jewish girls, but one of them came to America and I didn't...

LB So you couldn't play with her?

MW No, *not any more.*

LB Now what I've been trying to get at, here's your father. And he obviously had a multitude of economic investments. And you were playing with the little peasant girls. But you <sup>never</sup> prohibited from playing with children whose status was lower than yours. In other words, Don't play with those children. They're not nice.

MW No. They never said that. I remember this thing that. I remember that Sukkos time, I used to go up, we had a "kamera" full of English walnuts and they harvested it and I put it in my skirt and I went playing...

LB You keep saying "kamera"? What's a "kamera"?

MW Oh, it's a storage. They store apples and...it's not a cupboard. It's a very big place. But they have piles of apples...

LB Would it be like a root cellar, what we call a root cellar?

MW No, this was on ...a root cellar is underground. But this was on the second floor. On a clean floor. Bushels and bushels of English walnuts and Brazil, not Brazil, but hazel nuts and apples. Bushels of apples. And I used to go up there and get an apron full and then go play with the little boys and girls. And I was winning all the time. I was winning. So my father watched me from the window. And took all the nuts from me. And he took me on his lap and he said, No, that's not very nice that you win it. Just pull back and play it over and lose it. (laughs) And I went out there and lost. It's not very nice, he told me. You only see yourself, ~~the~~ ~~we~~ don't see the other children. And they probably needed the nuts you more than I did. So I went out there and I lost.

LB And there was no distinction made whether you played with Gentile children or Jewish children?

MW ~~It~~ No, it didn't make any difference. There wasn't too many Jewish children.

LB No, I can see. Was there anything, at the time that your brothers were going to school, that they went to the gymnase or they went to the university...

MW Well, they went to the city and they used to come home for the weekend...

LB Was there any quota on the number of Jews who could enter either the gymnasiu

MW No, there was no such thing.

LB No such thing. So any Jew...did you pay for gymnase?

MW Oh sure.

LB So any Jew who could afford to go to gymnase and could pass the matura could then enter the university of Budapest?

MW That's right.

LB Is that correct?

MW That's right. It doesn't make any difference.

LB So in this respect, was this a separate policy of Hungary or was that part of the Austro-Hungarian ~~pe~~ Empire's policy?

MW Well, it was not any more the Austria. Hungary was together. But at a certain time...

LB Well, after the first World War they separated.

MW They separated. Yes. So I don't know. I never knew any that they had any discrimination against the Jews, in higher places except in Horthy times.

LB During Horthy's time, but you were already...you were still there when Horthy took over, right? You were just on the verge of leaving. So you were actually did you live through the time of his...

MW No, I did not. From here I knew about it.

LB What did you hear from here? What did...

MW We didn't correspond with anybody. We had nobody there. I couldn't correspond.

LB You had no relatives, no uncles, no aunts?

MW I had an uncle in Budapest, but he died.

LB I see. And both your parents were orphans and there were no cousins.

MW That's right. And there was another brother my father had in Pest, that's just over the He also died just before I came to this country. So we didn't have anybody there. We had no uncle, no aunts.

LB All right. I think I am going to say Thank you. And I'm going to turn this tape off.