**Janet:** That was just to say that you would like to be interviewed. Okay, I am here today on August 4th, 1994. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. I'm about to speak with Irving Basking who came from Russia when he was 12 years old in 1923 and I look forward to hearing everything you can remember and I'll ask you the questions and whatever you remember is right.

Okay, Mr. Basking could you state your birth date first?

**Basking:** I was born in Russia, a little town named Strechin.

**Janet:** Could you spell that? Any Russian words are [crosstalk 00:00:41].

**Basking:** I might be able to spell it. S-T-R-E-C-H-I-N, Strechin. It’s a small town and the next main city was Zlobin.

**Janet:** Could you spell that?

**Basking:** Z-L-O-B-I-N and it was about 20 miles from our town.

**Janet:** Okay, now Strechin how would you describe it?

**Basking:** Well, the main capital of Strechin was [unclear 00:01:16].

**Janet:** What was it like?

**Basking:** My town?

**Janet:** Yeah.

**Basking:** My town, you see this building has 22 floors. You take three floors and this is the town [laughter].

**Janet:** And so everybody lived with the houses attached or were they just separate?

**Basking:** No, they were separate. Everybody had a small house. There was nothing only a ground floor house nothing upstairs and we had two rooms. We all lived, there was me, my brother, sister, my mother, my grandfather and there was an aunt.

We all lived in one house and as far as sleeping is concerned, we slept 4 in a bed and one slept- there was an oven and then there was like a --

**Janet:** Shelf.

**Basking:** A shelf and somebody used to sleep on top of that. It was very crowded and we were very poor, very poor.

**Janet:** Do you remember what you slept on?

**Basking:** Well, we had a bed but two used to sleep in the front and two on the other side.

**Janet:** Of the bed, wow.

**Basking**: And as far as cleanliness, there was a toilet outside. We had no sanitation whatsoever and whenever it used to snow, it’s not like here in America. The snow remained until when it got warm and that time the snow was so hard that if I looked through the window now you couldn't see nobody. That’s how hard it was.

One time [chuckle] I remember a funny thing, we had a Russian man in a hunchback and the time we had a lot of snow and we looked out in the window and we saw something walking, all we saw was his hat and my mother thought it was a pig [laughter]. That was very hard.

**Janet:** She thought it was a pig.

**Basking:** Yeah or something black walking I mean we didn't see him [laughter] and we had pretty rough there, we had nothing to eat. I stayed days. See my father was in the Russian- Japanese war, he left me when I was 4 years old and I haven't seen him until he sent for us. Through the war we had no communication whatsoever.

**Janet:** What was your fathers' name?

**Basking:** My father's name was Jack, [unclear 00:04:26] in Jewish Jack and he told us stories that were unbelievable.

**Janet:** Tell me something that you remember [crosstalk 00:04:35]?

**Basking:** He told us they had nothing to eat during the war there when he was a soldier. They used to eat rats, horses, whatever they could get a hold of.

**Janet:** Where was he during the war?

**Basking:** Japan.

**Janet:** He was in Japan.

**Basking:** Japan, Russian- Japanese. Then from there he went to America and we didn't hear from him for about 7-8 years then we heard from him and he sent for us and we travelled quite a lot. Now, I started to tell you about how we rich we are. We had nothing to eat, I used to eat days, one day by my aunt, one day by my uncle and it was really rough, really rough but we managed.

**Janet:** Now your grandfather, whose father was that?

**Basking:** Yes, my grandfather that’s my mother's father we lived with him. He was a tailor and we didn't even deal with money, I don't remember dealing with money. We used to let you like you want to do a pair of pants done or suit or whatever and they used to give us potatoes or flour things like that. We had one cow and about 2 families lived on that cow.

**Janet:** You milked the cow?

**Basking:** Yes and it was really rough like I said and I remember my father made me a pair of pants from [unclear 00:06:11], that is really cool [laughter] and it was really bad until we got here in America of course.

**Janet:** Well tell me your grandfather, what was his name?

**Basking:** His name was [unclear 00:06:29] and he was a tailor there. I had an uncle that used to be Kent, if he was here he would be very wealthy, he had a beautiful voice.

**Janet:** Your grandfather, he was your mother's father, so what was his last name?

**Basking:** Slovni, S-L-O-V-N-V-I and you know in America they changed it. When I came here I was 12 years old and one of my aunts took me to register the school, I was 12 years old.

**Janet:** Wait before we talk about America, let’s just first talk about Russia then we move along, okay. Your grandfather, do you remember any experiences with him in Russia?

**Basking:** There was nothing really exciting you know he was a tailor, a nice old man and he was very good to us you know he kept the whole family in his house because we had no place to live and I had a few aunts there.

**Janet:** They were in the house too?

**Basking:** No.

**Janet:** No.

**Basking:** Just this family, ask me something.

**Janet:** So your mother's name.

**Basking:** My mother's name was [unclear 00:07:51] and we travelled when my father sent for us, there are a few things I can remember very well. It took us about 2 months to get here, we stopped in Germany, in England and when we were on board ship- this is a funny thing.

Some of us were sick, seasick you know and mind you this is going back 70 years, more than 70 and the sailors- you think of things going on now with the robberies and all that politics and things. The sailors went around and they sold us oranges, I never saw an orange at that time.

We never knew what are orange or bananas, we didn't have that. $1 apiece for one orange and we green horns we took it and then when we got to Ellis island we had to stay there for 2 weeks, they wouldn't let us out because we had [unclear 00:09:04], we had lice.

That’s the thing where they had the bathtubs and if you had that, we used to go swimming of course in the lake and the women had- if you know the Jewish religion even over here they get to [unclear 00:09:26], they call it [unclear 00:09:26], they had a [unclear 00:09:27].

**Janet:** Did you go to school in Russia?

**Basking:** Yes, I went to Hebrew because we couldn't afford to go to school. We had to pay money we couldn't afford it. I almost became a rabbi when I came here, I was [unclear 00:09:50], you know [unclear 00:09:51] and when I got up to say the prayers though they knew right away I wasn't an American but what I'm trying to come back to, when I went to register to a school.

So we had a woman ask my aunt, my aunt took me and I was 12 years, I was a big boy already and she asked, "What’s his name?" She knew me as [unclear 00:10:18], so luckily she says we’ll call him Irvin, she could have given me some other fancy name [chuckle] and they put me before in kindergarten, kindergarten mind you. I was there a few days and they put 4A because I wasn't a baby and all along it was rough going, even coming here we had it rough.

My father had a job. He was a plasterer’s helper. At that time they had had to log everything, I once watched him work and I couldn't take it, now they got all different kind of things, all of these all of that but he had a job that when it rained he couldn't work, he was always outside. When it snowed he wasn't working and when it was cold he couldn't work, it was hot it was hot too work and the rest of the time there was no work [laughter]. Really we were on welfare and it was bad.

**Janet:** So now who travelled with you?

**Basking:** I came here with my mother, one brother and a sister and when we came here my mother had another baby, she had another boy. This little boy now 70 years old.

**Janet:**  What are your brothers and sisters names?

**Basking:** I have one brother his names is Nate, that’s the one that came with me. The other one is David, my sister's name is Rose. My sister is still alive thank God, she's in Florida. She's 86. I'm going to be 84 in September the 24th.

**Janet:** Well, going back to Russia again, what did you do for enjoyment? Do your remember any pleasant times?

**Basking:** Enjoyment yes, there was one particular thing. Sorry, I keep playing with that thing. We used to play. We used to make our own ball. We used to make it out with clothes you know make it with a lot rags and finally when we had a ball there was one game particular I remember, we didn't even have no baseball, I didn't know about baseball.

This is a wall and let’s say there were 4-5 boys, one boy, throw the ball against the wall and whoever catches it then the others have to run you know what I mean and then whoever catches the ball, the nearest one that he sees he used to hit him with the ball and that ball was a hard ball even harder than a baseball, much harder.

That was one game we played and there were other games and I still remember. We used to go swimming in the river. We made our own life preservers you know when you want to learn how to swim.

I remember one time we used to get grass, tall grass you know thick tall grass let’s say about this high for about 3 feet. So put down a bundle here and a bundle here, two bundles and we tied it around here, tied it around both hands and then we used to lay down under a cord, just remember whatever it was.

**Janet:** And that held you...

**Basking:** And that held you up and one time I remember one of the cords split open, that’s how I learnt to swim and I started to paddle with my hands but that’s kind of remember, there a lot of things that I remember. Most of the things were bad [laughter].

**Janet:** What kind of bad things?

**Basking:** Well, like we had nothing to eat, we hardly had anything to wear and like I told you I used to wear my sister's shoes and it was hand to mouth. And another thing I remember, they don't do it here, that’s not healthy. I remember my auntie had a child and you know how they used to feed them?

They didn't have no cakes or fancy things, they used to take bread, take it to the mouth, chew on it and take it out and feed the child and yet we all were healthy. Here, you get a little scratch and bingo you got to go to a doctor about it. Cleanliness was very rough that’s why they kept us in Ellis Island, we came here with lice.

**Janet:** Do you remember in Russia any instances when somebody was ill and they called for some kind of [crosstalk 00:15:59]?

**Basking:** I'll tell you about being ill. We didn't have no hospital in my town. We had a druggist. He was the main chief- a druggist. One day my mother went to visit a neighbor and the neighbor had a cow and the cow attacked my mother and the calf her so hard and that she was bleeding for 2 days and we couldn't get a doctor, just continued bleeding and finally this- we call them a [unclear 00:16:46], that’s a pharmacist that’s right and he helped her and thank God. Over here that would have been a big case [laughter].

**Janet:** Do you know what he did for her?

**Basking:** Nothing, I don't think he came to visit her?

**Janet:** The [unclear 00:17:06]?

**Basking:** No, nothing. Oh the [unclear 00:17:07] you mean.

**Janet:** What did he do?

**Basking:** He must have given her some kind of medication or compressors or whatever and she was alright and then again as far as water is concerned this people now out there in Africa, they know what water means now. We had problems like that too. We had no running water in the house, we had a well and out of that well most of the town had to get the water from there.

**Janet:** Do you remember your mother doing laundry?

**Basking:** I remember how she did laundry. We used to go by the lake, not in the house because she has to use a lot of water. We used to go by the lake, on the side and there was a big stone, a rock or whatever you call it and they used to wash it and they used to hit it with some wood you know and then rinse it out and they get up and....

**Janet:** And what chores did you have when you were a boy? What chores [crosstalk 00:18:25]?

**Basking:** What chores? Well, I used to go to a Hebrew school and really nothing I mean there was nothing for us to do. There's one thing I think that we go to work and get a job somewhere. When I came here i got a job right away, taking in. I was taken, I've already went out and delivered stuff from the stationery store.

I used to deliver merchandise to offices you know the papers days and right away I used to hang out with the American boys. I used to speak to them in Jewish, they speak in English and somehow rather we managed to understand each other.

**Janet:** But I mean around the house, was there anything that you used to do?

**Basking:** Around the house? Well, there was nothing really to do. Actually we couldn't go shopping and we had nothing to buy you know.

**Janet:** Did you have livestock or did you grow anything?

**Basking:** Yeah, we had a cow I told you. We had a cow and two families lived on that cow- one of my aunts. We made butter out of it of course and everything else out of that cow. One day I remember we were so many people in the house you know as I told you no room even to sleep, we had to sleep two in front of two but it was so cold we had to take the cow into the house then we realized after the cow went out we realized that she got popping [laughter].

I had a couple of aunts, uncles. It was really nothing exciting let’s put it this way. The only thing is at that time I remember even then the Jews were being hurt by the [unclear 00:20:37] you know what they called the gentiles. They used to throw stones at us, it wasn't that bad. I remember one time there was a man, he used to go about 20 miles to buy stuff and bring it to the town and sell it and one day when going there to the town remember I told you Zlobin, he got killed, somebody killed him. He had to pass a lot of woods and paths and all that.

**Janet:** Well did they kill him because they robbed him or?

**Basking:** They robbed him. Listen, even then things were rough with the crooks you know whatever you want to call them, things were bad.

**Janet:** Let see, when you got money it was your father finally sent money after the war?

**Basking:** Yes, sometimes we didn't get the money. They used to get it out of the envelope. He sent for us and another thing, the thing I remember now, he sent us we should go 1st class, we wound up 3rd class. We didn't know they put us there so we thought that’s where we belonged.

**Janet:** Do you remember leaving your town?

**Basking:** Leaving? Of course. We first had to go 20 miles to the town Zlobin because we had no trains in my town.

**Janet:** How did you get there?

**Basking:** Riding horse wagon and from there we took a train already to a big town, I don't remember the exact name. Maybe it was [unclear 00:22:29], I don't remember what town and then we went to German and I think from German we left.

**Janet:** Do you remember the name of the ship?

**Basking:** No, I don't. I have a passport, I still have the passport. It’s in one of the boxes that i have there.

**Janet:** Did you have examinations?

**Basking:** When we got here?

**Janet:** In Germany before you left?

**Basking:** Oh yeah they checked but I guess they didn't notice the lice [laughter], but they saw it over here and they wouldn't let us out. My father used to come to visit us and he came by boat and they wouldn't let him in you know we just had to see him and come to think of it, I didn't remember my father then. They said that’s my father and I had to believe it [laughter]. He was a nice man, my mother both.

**Janet:** Do you remember what you felt when you first saw your father?

**Basking:** It’s hard to believe I don't know you know you feel strange you never saw the man then they tell you it’s your father but when I got to know my father he was a good man, very good man.

He was 75 when he passed away, I remember I played cards with him, we played [unclear 00:23:59] and he made a mistake and I said, "What are you doing? You see what you did?" He says, "Don't Holla at me an orphan." He's an orphan [laughter] but he was carrying along. He was very nice and my mother [unclear 00:24:18] very religious woman.

Here already I'm talking about, I'll tell about my mother that it’s hard to believe, she never had an education, she never went to school, she didn't know how to read and write but she was so smart it’s hard to express what she did.

Very good and very religious I remember one time she taught me one thing that I'll never forget. She once sent me to a grocery you know we used to have this grocery stores not the supermarkets that they got now and we very seldom had money, so she gave me a dollar and I bought some stuff and the man gave me change of $10 and then I didn't know what to do because I thought maybe she gave me a dollar, I was taught that.

So, I come home I say, "Ma, what did you give me, a dollar or 10?" She says, "What kind of 10, I have no 10, I gave you a dollar." I said, "Look, what he gave me." "Go right back and give it back to him." And I grew up that way, they can call me anything they want but they can't say I'm not honest.

In almost every place I worked at I always had the key to the place, they trusted me. The fact is one boss, I was already about 18 years one of my first jobs, he trusted me with his wife and children. For that I mean he had a home in [unclear 00:26:00], a summer home.

He come over to me and he asked me, "Irving would you like to go and stay 2 weeks in the farm there?" In [unclear 00:26:10] he had a farm. I say, "Yeah." He says, "You'll have my Mrs. there," and I was there for 2 weeks and nothing and with him I remember another time, my first raise I started over $13 at that time they didn't give no checks, they gave cash.

**Janet:** What time? What year was this?

**Basking:** Excuse me.

**Janet:** What year?

**Basking:** I went out of school when I was 16, so that’s 78 years ago anyway I see $17 there somewhere there and [unclear 00:26:51] so I went there and [unclear 00:26:55], you have too much money get out of here. The next week I got $3 more in other words I got $20 so surely I thought this time it’s a mistake. I go in and the same things happen and he says, "Get out of here."

He was one of the best, I learnt from him a lot too. He was very honest and good. He asked me one time, he says to me, "You got a radio in your home?" I said, "No." and about a week or so later I come home and my mother says to me, [unclear 00:27:32], a strong boy calls and I remember it’s a radio and phonograph. I don't know if you remember those things and you don't remember the price, it was $110.

So I went over to him the next day and say, "Did you send...?" He says, "Yeah." I said, "I haven't got no money." He says, "Don't worry you'll pay me whenever you have it." He was a very nice man.

**Janet:** Now what was the business?

**Basking:** I was in embroidery line, pleating, stitching you know we worked for the dress line. All my life 54 years I was in that line.

**Janet:** And what was the company, the name?

**Basking:** The name of the first company was Orlando Brothers, they were two brothers.

**Janet:** Is this the man you're talking about that sent over the radio?

**Basking:** That’s right, the Orlando brothers. One of them passed away, he had a heart attack. Lucky he didn't kill anybody, he felt bad and he parked his car.

**Janet:** So where was this? Where was the company?

**Basking:** In New York on 36th street.

**Janet:** And where were you living?

**Basking:** I was living in Brownsville. First of all when we came here, we lived in Powell street, 113th Powell street, that’s what we were [unclear 00:29:03], then we moved a few blocks away to [unclear 00:29:06] was really also funny. A lot of funny things happen when you live that long. I lived over here Junior Street, right over here was the IRT train, about a block away there was the BMT going that way and down below there was a chuchu train. There was plenty of noise [laughter].

**Janet:** Do you remember any other attitudes that your mother or father had that they passed along to you?

**Basking:** I can tell you about my mother as I said she was a religious woman. When we came here and we lived and then we moved to [unclear 00:29:51], she and another woman a neighbor of ours they used to go every Friday to collect for the rabbi.

A poor rabbi was poor himself, he used to [unclear 00:30:07] this woman is to give bread, this one is give [unclear 00:30:09], this one is to give a piece of chicken and they used to get all that stuff and bring him and when he died I remember the rabbi he married me. When he died the block was black with those [unclear 00:30:30] you know all the hats there, they have a very nice name.

**Janet:** You were working at the Orlando brothers, were you working for them when you met your wife?

**Basking:** No, I met my wife in another place. My wife how I met [unclear 00:30:52], I was a foreman there and there was a fellow that used to come up at 11 O'clock and ask for anybody who wants to- he used to work in the lunch room, in the lunch place.

So they used to [unclear 00:31:16] whatever they want and they deliver it. One day, he asked me if I can get his sister a job. I didn't even what nationality he was. I tell you he was, I thought he was Italian. I said, "Yeah, bring her up." To make a long story short, I saw her and sort of liked her and she only lived a few blocks away from me and I asked her for a date and that’s how I met her.

**Janet:** Did you give her a job too?

**Basking:** Yeah, I gave her a job, sure she worked there that’s where I met her and I remembered I spent my whole pay. I was making at that time over $50. I myself never went there, we were up on a plane, a two sitter, site seeing and then I pay $2, her mother gave me hell, I gave her hell too and then after 9 months we got married.

One thing I can say and she could say the same thing, I traded in my whole for her there. She never married me for money and I never married her for money, I had nothing and she had double nothing but we're still married by the way. We just celebrated our 55th anniversary.

**Janet:** Tell me a little bit about- like what was involved in being a foreman in the factory?

**Basking:** A foreman, you have to know where of course where machine is you know like sewing machine. Everything was sewing machine and then it was pleating machine. I can't explain it to you.

I'm talking about my line, let’s say you manufacture dresses, you cut the whole dress out you know sleeves, front and back and skirt wherever and then if you have any trimming like you want embroidery over here or you want shaving on the skirt and they used to give it to us and that we pleated, you know a pleated skirt?

We used to do a pleated. I got to tell you a little story about pleating, now they got all kinds of materials you know that it doesn't shrink, it doesn't change color.

I remember we got an order of pleated skirts and I think it was about two or three hundred skirts and when you have about 50 or 100 you ship it out and they start working on it and I made the shipment I get a call, "Irving you ruined me, what happened?" See we used to pleat the skirts and then they put into a box, a steam box they called it.

We used to make our own steam and after 10- 20 minutes you take it out and it holds its place. It was all white, everything was white. The whole dress was white. He says, "The pleated skirt changed yellow," I didn’t know what to say, I say, "I tell you what to do, I still have some here. Send the boy over, give him a package of our skirt and I want to see what’s going."

I take that whole package and I take a whole of what that we didn't do yet and I walk over to the window and from the sun it changed color, from the sun mind you. So we had to get the whole shebang back and make everything one color, the whole dress and you know the sleeves and whatever was left over and at last they said, "That’s fine."

**Janet:** So did your wife continue working after you were married?

**Basking:** No, she didn't work then I had to go, then the war started. I was married in 1939. Put that thing again [laughter]. I went to work in Connecticut, became a welder and I had no children at that time so single fellows, single men they used to ship across and I found myself in the army after a year or so.

**Janet:** Wait a minute. You go out in Connecticut, what was there?

**Basking:** Submarine base. I become a welder.

**Janet:** I got to give you something that doesn't make noise.

**Basking:** It’s alright. Actually I could say that I won the war, first I build the ships then I went to fight over there. I was there three and half years in the army.

**Janet:** You had no children at that time?

**Basking:** No, the fact is we never had children. We adopted a little girl. The little girl is 45 years older right now.

**Janet:** What’s your daughter's name?

**Basking:** My daughter’s name is Rachelle and she had it rough too. She got married, now she remarried but thank God we're still here, what can I tell you.

**Janet:** So how did you feel about serving in the army?

**Basking:** How did I feel?

**Janet:** How did you feel about being drafted?

**Basking:** There was nothing I could do. I could have dodged the army or actually we remained maybe in the states I didn’t know. I had a perforated ear drum and before we went across, the captain, I remember his name [unclear 00:37:35], came over to me and said, "Look, I can leave you here," [unclear 00:37:42] but you never know somebody got to grab you and here I was already with the office six months before we went across so I went with them.

Of course it was pretty bad when we got across, we came there and all of a sudden they told us to start digging ditches. "What for? We're in town." There's a plane comes here without a pilot then it’s a [unclear 00:38:09]. I said, "How can a bomb fly without a pilot?" There were the [unclear 00:38:13].

I once saw one of them hit 14 house two floors from the impact. They put in the railway often by the way, what do I know about railroad, they used to travel the IRT all of my life [chuckle] and they put me in the hospital train. Our job was to go- we always followed the army but they were friends, we were in England, they used to take from France back to England in a train and from Frankfurt Germany where my first day was a very bad experience.

I helped the nurses in the darkness there you know, I walked in and there the soldiers laying there with stomachs open, with their hands shut off, it was a bad sight so I walked out. I couldn't take it it was a shot then I said to myself what I'm doing? These poor boys they went through so much, you got to help them then I come back and i say, "Anybody here from Brooklyn?" That started it off and after that nothing bad in me.

I became so hard you'd be surprised, how that came in then when I first went into the army, I was timid- quiet you know whatever they told you to do I would do and I remember they gave me two pair of shoes and they didn't fit me and I had a sergeant, a gentile he hated my guts because I was Jewish so he used to pick on me. "Basking go on KP," I come out of KP, "Basking go on guard duty." And I was told I got to listen and finally one day when he took my shoes away we were in a camp I remember it was raining, we were in [unclear 00:40:29] comes in, "Go on guard duty."

I didn't have no shoes, I had a pair of civilians shoes somebody gave me and I got so angry and I said, "I'm not going," and I left the tent and I went to the supplier room and I said, "Where the hell are my shoes?" For two weeks I had to wait for them, there was a lieutant he changed my life.

Some people could change your life for good and for bad both. He heard me howl and he comes over, "What’s the matter soldier?" I tell him the story, the guy picks on me, I got my shoes. He says to me, "Your mother is not here, you have to help yourself." Oh boy, after that I never had it so good. I come over I want to piss, I never wore underwear more than once or twice a day, a pair of shoes, I want socks.

In other words what I'm trying to bring out is he opened up my mouth and even to now if I'm right I'll tell you, if I'm wrong I'll apologies to you but you’re not going to put nothing over on me you know what I mean. Not that I'm so smart, I'm only able to say that if you're right your right but if you try to throw your weight around and if you're wrong, I'll let you have it, I'll let you know.

But actually you know I became more and more- I wouldn't say rough, well I answered back, before I didn't answer anybody, they could tell me do it, do it. Now if you tell me go to KP, I say, "Listen I was in KP and I'm off duty now." In other words you give that point and tell you that you're wrong and I'm right and that’s it.

**Janet:** And this lieutenant that you encountered in there when you were going to the [crosstalk 00:42:40], why do you think he made such an impact on you then?

**Basking:** Because he told me that, "Your mother is not here you have to fight for your own, your mother can't tell you what to do. You got to do it yourself." It penetrated in that thick of head of mine [unclear 00:42:59] and I didn't have it too bad, thank God.

The only bad experience I had and I thank God for that, I remember we went from France to Germany, we went by truck and there was booby traps all around. The driver took a wrong street, a wrong road so he hollad out to me, "Hey, Basking go down and direct me." because if he go off the road that will hit the mine. So another fella, another soldier next to me said, "I'll go down," "Alright, go ahead." He goes down boom, the leg was taken right off and would you believe I ended him? Now ask me why?

**Janet:** Why?

**Basking:** Because he was going home [chuckle], at least he's going home without a leg but that’s the way. Fate wasn't bad. Thank God I came home safe and sound.

**Janet:** How do you think being in the war affected you after that?

**Basking:** Well as I told you...

**Janet:** You became more assertive.

**Basking:** I had more confidence in myself you know what I mean. Not that I became a bully or anything, that’s not. As I said before if you were right, I'll thank you on this but if you're wrong you'll hear from me.

**Janet:** How about coming here as an immigrant? How do you think that affected you later on in your life? Just the fact that [crosstalk 00:44:42].

**Basking:** The best thing was that I had something to eat [chuckle] and then I became one of the boys. I started to fell out with the young fellows and went to school, I had to go out of school though when I think in the 8A or 8B I was supposed to graduate already but things were bad, we were on welfare and my father like I told you he had a job that he couldn't work all year [chuckle], so we had to work my sister and I. I remember my first week's salary $15 I gave $14.50 to my mother and 50 cents I kept for coffee for the next week. Yeah it was well, I went through a lot.