**Janet:** This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. We are here today in the Ellis Island world history studio. Its February 6th I think 1995.

**Abraham:** Correct.

**Janet:** It’s February 5th 1995.

**Abraham:** Yeah.

**Janet:** I am here with Abraham Honigman. Mr. Honigman came from Eastern Europe where the boarders had changed right before you left and will talk about that but it was in 1920 when you came here through Ellis Island and you were 12 years old.

**Abraham:** During the 1920 yeah.

**Janet:** Okay today, you are 86 about to be 87 in March 15th this year.

**Abraham:** Right.

**Janet:** Well, why don’t we start at the beginning? If you would say your birth date and then you can tell where you were born and how it changed, the boarders changed?

**Abraham:** Okay, my birthday is March 15th 1908, I was born. I was born under the Russian flag, in 1908. In 1917, when the devolution became in Russia. The allies took it and they gave it to Romania. The place that I come from is known as Bessarabia.

**Janet:** Would you spell that.

**Abraham:** B-E-S-S-A-R-A-B-I-A, that was Russia, and then when I came here as a Romania in 1917, it was Romania.

**Janet:** Okay.

**Abraham:** That’s the story and we lived out through the war from 1914 to 1917 we went through the war.

**Janet:** Okay and you were in Bessarabia?

**Abraham:** Yeah.

**Janet:** During that time.

**Abraham:** Yeah.

**Janet:** What do you personally remember about those 3 years, 14 to 17 and that?

**Abraham:** You want to know about the war? Well, I remember when the war started. We ran away from our town because we were the border town with Austria. The town of Austria that we came from was known as [inaudible 00:02:15] and we ran to a different city. The city of [inaudible 00:02:26].

**Janet:** Could you spell that?

**Abraham:** L-U-V-K-O-N, something that area, I really don’t know and we stood there about 2, 3 days then went back to our city known as Nova Sulita N-O-V-A-S-U-L-I-T-A. That was Russia, throughout the war we fought with the Austrian army. I actually remember, the place Bomb being that the oil was at the scene, I don’t know I think so because I looked up and I have seen the aero plane they were throwing down and grenades from the aeroplane and there was a Russian Armory in our city. The hand grenade fell on my cousin’s house and they killed her with her child that was in 1916. That’s the story and then we left the Nova Sulita in 1920 to come to the USA.

**Janet:** What was your life like, let’s say prior to 1914, do you remember anything from those days?

**Abraham:** Yes, my father came, left for the United States in 1904. No, no in 1912 then and.

**Janet:** You were four years old?

**Abraham:** I was four years old, when my father left and I remember it, and when the Titanic went down, my mother thought that he was on that ship and she cried and went over and I asked her, “What are you crying.” So, she says, “I think your father was on this ship known as Titanic,” but he wasn’t, he was on the ship that we came to this country in 1920.

**Janet:** What’s the name of that one?

**Abraham:** I don’t remember the name of the ship, that’s one thing I don’t. I think Eleanor knows the name.

**Janet:** On here it has Noordam.

**Abraham:** So, it was Noordam but I don’t remember it so.

**Janet:** Okay, so you remember, well what was your father’s name?

**Abraham:** Sam.

**Janet:** Sam.

**Abraham:** Shulim in Jewish.

**Janet:** Your mother’s name?

**Abraham:** Yenta, Yatter in English.

**Janet:** What was her maiden name, do you remember that?

**Abraham:** Alexandravich .

**Janet:** Oh boy, Alexandravich?

**Abraham:** Yeah Alexandravich.

**Janet:** Now you had two older, no one older brother?

**Abraham:** I had one older brother and one older sister. My older sister is dead, my older brother is alive. My younger I had a younger brother, he is dead too. His name was Marta in Jewish, in English it’s Max. He was a school teacher.

**Janet:** What about your other brother the one who said.

**Abraham:** Isadora, he is still alive.

**Janet:** Your sister’s name, the older one.

**Abraham:** Mariam in Jewish, May in English.

**Janet:** The baby was born here?

**Abraham:** Yes in 1921.

**Janet:** Her name?

**Abraham:** Her name is Sylvia Soya. She is named after my grandmother. Soya S-O [inaudible 00:05:44] Sylvia.

**Janet:** Okay.

**Abraham:** Her name is Silvia and she is a social worker.

**Janet:** How about your grandparents, do you remember them from your--?

**Abraham:** Yes, Soya was my grandmother, I remember her, and my youngest sister is named after her.

**Janet:** What do you remember about that grandmother any time did you spend.

**Abraham:** The most beautiful, the most intelligent, the most gracious woman, poor that’s all I can tell you.

**Janet:** Did you ever do things with her, or helped her, or did she ever tell you story?

**Abraham:** Well, I used to play dirty tricks from her.

**Janet:** Like what?

**Abraham:** I loved her, you know it’s a, she was a beautiful person and she was no from you know poor, my father was the elder, my mother took, she was with my mother. She used to be proud of her, and we were proud of her and very intelligent. Are you a religious person?

**Janet:** Well not in any of this.

**Abraham:** Neither I’m I, I remember I used to go with her to synagogue. So, that she used to read her older women because they couldn’t read. So, she read them from the Bible, beautiful person. This I remember like today, my mother went over to her and told her, “Momma I’m going to America,” in Jewish she told her. So, she said to her, and the Jewish religion is, that the husband has to come to the wife.

So, my mother answered that, “Because he can’t, he sent me ticket to come.” That was in 1920. In fact he sent those in 1913 when the war broke out and he was stuck in Russia.

**Janet:** Did you go to school there at all?

**Abraham:** Where no?

**Abraham:** We, were four and I didn’t go to school at all no.

**Janet:** How about, now you didn’t know your grandfather?

**Abraham:** No, I did not.

**Janet:** You didn’t. Did you know the grandmother or grandmother on the other side?

**Abraham:** Yes, I knew them.

**Janet:** What do you remember about them?

**Abraham:** Well, they were two beautiful people, she was a midwife my grandmother, my father’s mother. Stories that I was told in this country in the United States, I met people they told me that she used to come, those that didn’t have any money to take their children from the mothers, from South life that people that they took, used to tell me the story because I was a non-paid officer in the union or 50 years or more, maybe 60. That’s all I can tell you. Beautiful person, and my grandfather, nice where he was a Furrier in Europe too, he came from Furriers.

**Janet:** Now, do you remember anything in the old country what people did for enjoyment, what kinds of observances that they [crosstalk 00:09:12].

**Abraham:** They were religious, they went to Synagogue, hardworking people, poor. We remember it and that’s all I can tell you.

**Janet:** Yeah.

**Abraham:** Nice, very fine. Most of them are religious, you know it’s a small town, and very fine people. So, I remember.

**Janet:** Was this a mostly Jewish town?

**Abraham:** No, well we had 7 towns in Jewish there in the town and we lived on the street known as Gypsy street, why was it known, because about a thousand years ago, Gypsies moved in and they remained there, nice people.

**Janet:** So, you grew up around Gypsies?

**Abraham:** Yeah I grew there yeah. I mean they didn’t observe the Gypsy but they were not, they were musicians of the town, most of them beautiful people.

**Janet:** What do you remember, do you remember any experiences?

**Abraham:** Yeah, I remember they work hard people, they used to play music on weddings and some of them were officers in the Russian army. The fact is I think about ten years ago, I went Israel and for this to do with my wife, see my wife as an officer in the union and that’s all.

We met, my cousin and I asked him questions about the Gypsies, I had suspicion on me that some they were anti-Semitic but she told me different story that when the when the fight broke out and the Romanians started to kill Jews for the Germans a lot of them joined out for the Jewish to fight them, the Romanians and the Germans, that’s all I can tell you about that.

**Janet:** Do you remember, can you say anything else about the town, where you lived?

**Abraham:** Nice, poor town, people were starving during the First World War, that’s all I can tell you, poverty all over.

**Janet:** What would be, do you remember the house you lived in, can you describe?

**Abraham:** We did not have a house, we rent, real poor, we rented you know, very what can I tell you, that’s it.

**Janet:** So, when you father came to the United States, were you living with your grandmother?

**Abraham:** No, my grandmother lived with my mother. Wherever we lived she would stay with us.

**Janet:** Okay, so when it was decided that you would live, did your mother.

**Abraham:** In 1919, my father sent a letter to my mother that has taken them over and I had a cousin in [inaudible 00:12:35], he was an attorney back then. I went to [inaudible 00:12:42] I because…

**Janet:** Yourself.

**Abraham:** Yeah, because I insisted with my mother, I was always the one to experience and I remember very well, fine person.

**Janet:** So you and your mother travelled?

**Abraham:** No, I myself went to [inaudible 00:12:42], I should meet the family and then they came back to me and gave my mother the tickets that my father sent in 1920. It was 1919 he started, and they couldn’t it was well left the door and then in 1920 we got it and we left our city to come to the USA.

**Janet:** Just before we talk about your leaving, was there anything else about the war, the 1st world war, the war that you saw first bomb coming down.

**Abraham:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Were there any other experiences that you did.

**Abraham:** Yeah, they, the soldiers in the town they were fighting the bombing in the towns, and that time they didn’t have the bombs they used to throw the bombs with hand grenades in 1915, 16 you know that’s it.

**Janet:** So, your town was hard hit?

**Abraham:** Yeah, was it, but the fact is they were aiming at an armory. There was an armory in our little town, and the bomb fell on my cousin’s house and she was killed, I remember that incident. I also remember my mother saw this attack, you know as he had to call on the taxes, in those days they were called the, they developed the horses.

He came and he said, they watch makers rivals kill us all, my mother started to you know cry. So, a soldier came over to her and I was with her, and told her lady don’t because he can hear the us, the plane went low not like now. We don’t want the enemy to hear us, and that’s the experience I heard.

**Janet:** Were you ever having to hide, or anything during the war?

**Abraham:** Well, I told you we left in 1914 for Luvkon because they told us that the Austrians are going to bomb our little town, our facility so we went to our cousin that known as Luvkon and then we came back again and we lived out through the war. That’s it.

**Janet:** Okay, well then when you left, do you remember your leaving?

**Abraham:** Yes, the whole town came to see us off. This is I do remember now. My grandmother was a kind person and since they loved her, and since they loved my mother it seems and you know children I was, my brother was ten and I was 12. No, I wasn’t 12 yet, because we came here in June in 1920. In March I was Bar Mitzvah because March is my birthday, March 15th. The whole town came to see us off, this I remember.

**Janet:** Do, you remember what people said, did people know?

**Abraham:** Yes, they yes my mother and us, and my grandmother was crying and we left her alone, my youngest sister is named after my grandmother, quite intelligent.

**Janet:** Had many people left from the town?

**Abraham:** Yes yeah.

**Janet:** To come to the United States at that point that you knew about.

**Abraham:** Well, we were one of the first actually, as years to come, they came yes.

**Janet:** Did people, were they happy for you leaving, were they.

**Abraham:** Yes, they were glad that my mother will have a better life, they loved her and actually we were good children you know, my oldest sister worked selling, you know to the soldiers during the war and my mother used to bake bread in order to exist. We couldn’t get anything from my father because the war was on. You know the mail didn’t come through and that’s the story.

**Janet:** So, your mother was baking bread, and sell to the.

**Abraham:** Baking bread, selling it and my brother, my older brother he was three years older than my sister. She was about six years older than me, yes. My brother is two years, four years something in that area, he is going to be 89 and I’ll be 87.

**Janet:** Were you closest to any particular family member, when you were young, when you were over there?

**Abraham:** Yes, my younger brother Max, [inaudible 00:18:00] I loved him. I remember an incident leaving Nova Silita he was lost, and some person brought him with a wagon, and I also remember a very interesting thing, one of their patrols. We were Austrian patrols, Russian patrols. A Russian patrol came over to my mother and told her, “If you see the Austrian don’t stop, because we will start shooting and you will be killed in the middle.” I mean that was the story, I remember that because it was very dramatic to me.

**Janet:** Yeah, can you describe what you were like, when you were 12 years old, when you were just leaving to come to this country.

**Abraham:** Well, I was a child during, doing things where an average child would do at that age. But nothing in particular that I can really say and.

**Janet:** What was Max like, what kind of personality?

**Abraham:** Very fine young boy, beautiful person, I took care of him as much as I could, and when we came to this country I made sure that he goes through college and so my younger sister too.

**Janet:** Okay, so let’s talk about when you were living and the whole town turned out.

**Abraham:** Yes, most of the town came to see us off on the train. I could say I actually lead on, as much as I remember.

**Janet:** Yeah, a lot of people.

**Abraham:** It may not be so but a lot of people, as a child I was 12 there were a lot of people.

**Janet:** So, then you boarded a train right in the town.

**Abraham:** Yeah and we went from our town we went to Bucharest, that’s Romania.

**Janet:** Did you have to stay there?

**Abraham:** Yeah, we stood there until we had the passport signed, it took us nine weeks to travel to, and we came to this country before we went to French and then we took a [inaudible 00:20:19].

**Janet:** Where did you stay and what was that like?

**Abraham:** Well, it was, we stood in our place and private home, my mother paid them, I don’t know the price where they pay them you know what I mean.

**Janet:** Yeah, did you have, so you left with them?

**Abraham:** Yeah, from France, we went from Bucharest, we went all over Europe actually, because it was right after the first world war, so travelling wasn’t so good and went to France.

**Janet:** Probably Le Havre right?

**Abraham:** Mmh?

**Janet:** Le Havre.

**Abraham:** No, we came in into Paris and then Le Havre, and something like that, and then from Paris we went, in fact I had an experience in Paris, we came near the, a subway station and I was always a daring child, I ran down and I have seen the train on it, it was subway and I called my sister to show her the train that’s my experience.

**Janet:** Let’s see. So, did you have examinations prior to.

**Abraham:** In this country, there too we were examined, and we were all fed, and then when we came here, my father came with my uncle to take us all.

**Janet:** Well, do you remember the ship, do you remember the passage in any way?

**Abraham:** The passage I remember but I don’t remember the ship we had a lot of Gypsies in our boat, Jews and Gypsies and all kinds of people, it took us 14 days to travel. In fact my father came on the same ship in 1912 as we came. I think we went on the, after us, they took all the ship off the water, you know what I mean, it wasn’t safe I guess.

**Janet:** What was it like, do you remember any experiences of board ship.

**Abraham:** Well, you know we were in third class, actually we got second class tickets but my mother didn’t want to wait and we went third class. Poor food and whatever it is, I mean it wasn’t bad, you know what I mean, that’s you know.

**Janet:** Do you remember coming into the New York Harbor?

**Abraham:** Yes.

**Janet:** What was that?

**Abraham:** Oh yes, we were looking up about a week here, we had about a week here and my father came in with my uncle.

**Janet:** You mean you were week here in Ellis Island?

**Abraham:** Yes.

**Janet:** So, well when you came in do you remember anything about Ellis Island, your impression when you saw it.

**Abraham:** Yeah, my mother called me Jewish [foreign dialect 00:23:11] is the Statue of Liberty. So, for the first time I seen it.

**Janet:** Did you know what it was, did he tell you.

**Abraham:** Yeah she told me. She told me in Jewish, “You are free, in this country Jew and Gentile going to live happily.” I mean she told me in Jewish she is quite intelligent.

**Janet:** How about this building and on Ellis Island, what was your experience here, what happened?

**Abraham:** Not bad, they gave us food, food and we slept here, and I liked the experience, I enjoyed it?

**Janet:** Do you know why you needed to stay awake?

**Abraham:** Why is because my father had some problems I don’t know why, but we stood on, almost a week here.

**Janet:** During that time, were you treated--?

**Abraham:** Treated not bad, not bad. Not poor they gave you food slept and that’s all.

**Janet:** Was there, were there lots of different people I mean that’s new for you, you see so many different.

**Abraham:** Yeah a lot of different people. All religions and people you know. Nice people.

**Janet:** So, what was the reunion like with your father?

**Abraham:** Well, I didn’t see him for eight years, but I remember his face. From 1904 and it was quite an experience because he looked a lot like his mother and the terrible thing that happened in 1914. They came from a little town, and they were in that house, it was a little [unclear 00:25:09], and they came to our house. My grandmother and my grandfather.

She was a beautiful woman, she was a mid-wife and I was six years old and we were very hungry that morning because we didn’t have any food. So, I said to them, “Why did you come to us, we have nothing to eat ourselves? And it hurt me very much the minute I said it and I have never forget it. You follow me?

**Janet:** Forgivable, it’s really, it’s forgivable.

**Abraham:** What a child can do, the hunger.

**Janet:** Right.

**Abraham:** What I want to tell you is what hunger can bring down to you, I always repeat it to my children when I say to them, and I have never seen that again after that. She died in 1916 and there was an epidemic called…

**Janet:** Cholera?

**Abraham:** Yeah, cholera up there and she died. My grandfather died during the Second World War and that’s it.

**Janet:** So, when your father came to Ellis Island did he come by himself or was he?

**Abraham:** No, he came with my uncle.

**Janet:** His brother?

**Abraham:** Yeah.

**Janet:** You knew him also.

**Abraham:** No, I didn’t remember him. He died quite young. He died when he was 35. There were no unions when they came and they used to work all kinds of hours and he died of TB in 19, when he was 35 years old in 1925 he died.

**Janet:** What was your father doing here for work?

**Abraham:** Furrier.

**Janet:** Furrier.

**Abraham:** Yeah.

**Janet:** Your uncle too?

**Abraham:** Yeah, they all come from Furriers because my grandfather was a Furrier too in Europe.

**Janet:** So, when your mother and father, and the rest of the family united again here, where did you go when you left Ellis Island?

**Abraham:** We went to my uncle’s house on 7th Street in Avenue B. But then, we went to an apartment in 9th street, 719 East 9th street. We lived there till 1925 and then we moved to the Bronx.

**Janet:** Do, you remember anything about your first few days in this country or anything that.

**Abraham:** Well it was nice to me, we had food he was a good father, he was intelligent. He didn’t -what I can tell you is both my grandfather and my father, great grandfather, he was a nice person in general and my mother gave birth to this child and that’s it.

**Janet:** Well, okay I think maybe this is a good pausing point. We are going to turn the tape over.

**Abraham:** Do whatever you want.

**Janet:** And then we’ll continue about life in this country.

**Abraham:** Okay.

**Janet:** Okay, we were talking about, when you first came here, and your uncle and father picked you up at Ellis Island and you went to.

**Abraham:** Yeah, so my brother was sitting next to my uncle and they asked him, do you speak Jewish?

**Janet:** Just a bit.

**Abraham:** Well, like my son, my daughter. No, no my daughter Ree she is, [inaudible 00:28:50]. See this is what they asked him.

**Janet:** Well, how is it.

**Abraham:** How did the car run without a horse? You see, he was ten years old, very fine human being.

**Janet:** So, then you were in the lower east side for five years.

**Abraham:** Yes.

**Janet:** What do you remember about that, what was life like?

**Abraham:** Well poor, to be honest with you, I didn’t have to but I went to work, there was an Eagle Pencil company on 14th street because when my mother gave birth to my sister I wanted to have money, and I also wanted to give my brother money, I wanted to make sure that he goes to school.

**Janet:** But you yourself.

**Abraham:** No, I didn’t want to, because I took over that I have seen, that if I would help my brother and my sister I would do better than myself, I went and got a job by Eagle Pencil Company on 14th street on Avenue D. I got $8 a week for 48 hours, for 50 hours.

**Janet:** Were you just a 12 year old then, or was this a little bit later.

**Abraham:** Well I was, she was pregnant then, I was 12 and a half, because my bar mitzvah was March and she gave birth in March, my mother to my sister.

**Janet:** So, what did you do in the Eagle-Pencil company?

**Abraham:** Curved wood for pencils and that’s it.

**Janet:** How long did you stay?

**Abraham:** I stood there, until I had to go back to school.

**Janet:** You mean.

**Abraham:** I was only 12 and a half.

**Janet:** The authorities made you go to school you mean?

**Abraham:** Yeah.

**Janet:** You had to go.

**Abraham:** Yeah, and when I was 14, I got my working papers I went to work on 1st.

**Janet:** Now, meanwhile your father was in the Fur business.

**Abraham:** Yeah he was, but you know he wasn’t too hot, he had to work, I mean he worked and I made whatever I can make.

**Janet:** So, did you, when you went to school and when you first went to work and you went to school. Were you able to speak English?

**Abraham:** I learnt I mean I didn’t become a professor which I still I’m not. Anyway and that’s it.

**Janet:** Was it difficult do you remember when?

**Abraham:** Oh! It was difficult at first but I got along, I spoke, because I can, I had a gift to speak, do you follow me? And it was natural to come out, the things that I thought. I had a lot of, I tell you feelings for the poor, you understand, I always tried to give, I was not a taker, I couldn’t. I couldn’t take of my father. I went to work young and I gave whatever I could to my brother and my sister and my friends whoever as much as I thought that’s all.

**Janet:** When you, when did you get involved in the Union, did you stay in the fur line.

**Abraham:** Oh yes.

**Janet:** That’s where you entered into union activities.

**Abraham:** Yes, well I got into the union in ‘26. Yeah and I met my wife in 1929, she was an officer in the Union and I married her.

**Janet:** So, tell me, you mentioned before when Tape wasn’t on, how you came to be, to realize that it was important that they bring the Unions.

**Abraham:** Well, you’ve only seen a man. I went to deliver some garments to my father, and I see a man come out crying that his wife died, and they had children, and they were starving and he didn’t know what to do and he had no job. I said to myself, “Why shouldn’t he have a job, it’s such a good country and this is when I went to the union to try to make it better, and that’s how I remained all over my life.

**Janet:** So, did you try, did you stop working in the fur trade.

**Abraham:** No, I worked, I worked until I retired in 1960. I got asthma and emphysema from the industry and I worked till I retired and so did my wife. She had an education but she wanted to work and she became an officer.

**Janet:** What were your activities like for the union, on behalf of the union, what kind of.

**Abraham:** Well, I was there, you know a council member, I was speaking, organize without. I worked in factories, I was not a paid official. I did work on my own that’s right.

**Janet:** How did you meet your wife?

**Abraham:** In the Union.

**Janet:** In a meeting or?

**Abraham:** No, she was an official, she was a very pretty young lady and I went in to her and I spoke to her, and this is how we started. We got married very young, she was 17, I was 21.

**Janet:** What was your wife’s name?

**Abraham:** Mildred.

**Janet:** Her maiden name?

**Abraham:** Okin.

**Janet:** O-A-K?

**Abraham:** O-K-I-N.

**Janet:** Okay.

**Abraham:** Very intelligent, very extremely intelligent. It was, one of a kind. I show you my 50 wedding anniversary.

**Janet:** So, did you work together then union?

**Abraham:** No, no. We never worked. Yeah at one period we were worked on factory, you see this is my wife. This is my daughter, my son, my granddaughter she graduated on [inaudible 00:35:50] last month and that’s my wife, she is my wife. You can see how pretty she was.

**Janet:** So, what else would you say about your working life?

**Abraham:** Bizarre, I was discriminated.

**Janet:** In what way?

**Abraham:** Because people were afraid I would organize, and you know more into the left, highly leaned more into the left than to the right you know what I mean, that time of the period, and that’s it.

**Janet:** Well did you leave working for your father then?

**Abraham:** No, I never worked for my father.

**Janet:** You never did?

**Abraham:** Never did. The fact that my father became a worker in later years and that’s it.

**Janet:** So, what was your philosophy behind becoming so active?

**Abraham:** Poverty.

**Janet:** In the union.

**Abraham:** That people should live better, that people need organization, that people need kindness and they needed leadership and this is the reason. I always had a lot of compassion for people, to me it’s feeling that you are born with you know that’s it what can I tell you.

I couldn’t eat if I would see you hungry. I had an experience once with my wife, but we didn’t have a job, we were both regularly discriminated and we walked from Sim-Sim Street downtown, we didn’t have no café but we had a dime we went there and we bought, we ordered a sandwich. We put it on the table and as we went for the coffee a man sat down and he ate it.

So, we gave them the coffee, that’s the experience and the only reason I came was because Eleanor told me, it will do you good and I wanted to spread, you got to be human, it doesn’t always work out but you try. This is the, part of my life and so was my son and my daughter.

**Janet:** Tell me your children’s names for the…

**Abraham:** Barbra, his son, you want my grandchildren?

**Janet:** How many do you have?

**Abraham:** I have a great granddaughter married already.

**Janet:** So, you have great grandchildren?

**Abraham:** Julie, Jane. This one graduated now, he is working in Texas and her husband is taking the board examination. They are quite successful, not rich, poor that’s it.

**Janet:** What do you think, what kind of impact do you think it had on you as a person to have.

**Abraham:** To what?

**Janet:** What kind of an impact do you think it had on you as a person, to have been born in Russia and then in Romania and to have come here after the first world war as an immigrant to this country.

**Abraham:** Well, I thought to myself I was lucky that I got out there, that we could do things for people. I mean I’m talking about myself and it’s all that I can tell you. We did things to, we did things the best to our ability that’s all I could tell you.

**Janet:** What are you most proud of having done?

**Abraham:** Huh?

**Janet:** What do you feel most proud of having done?

**Abraham:** That I married my wife and I had beautiful children, and when I did I didn’t make any money, I didn’t look for it, I did it because I believed in it. Some of it was good and some of it was not, you’ve seen what happens all over the world.

You’ve seen what happened in Russia or this is, I know you are Jewish what happened in [unclear 00:40:43], what happened in Austria, when they build a cross in our streets, six and a half million Jews were killed. That hurts me.

Where you take such beautiful people, and yeah really I mean you know, I don’t have to not find to, make the Jews outstand, of course there are some bad but in general they were fine, since there was a, I want this to go on tape even on 13th that showed you the, the Worcester ghetto, nothing. We don’t care he didn’t come, or they built a church in Auschwitz, that hurts me.

Because we gave our blood, that killed our six and a half million human beings. That bothers me, and I say to myself, “Hey what did you fight for?” You know what I’m talking about, and that’s what hurts me today, see. So, then I say to myself once it was worth it what I did, who knows, it seems the world don’t we don’t protest and I think it’s something and I can go to church when they, not I’m against the church but I know they were Jews they were killed. And I don’t know whether that is good or not, to tell it to you, but that’s how I feel about it.

**Janet:** When you say you were fighting, you mean in the Union fighting for the economy.

**Abraham:** But in life for the workers that’s all. They should live, they should be able to bring up their children properly which I did for me, and I believe everybody should do it for themselves that’s it.

**Janet:** Do you feel that you have any, customs or ways that you are that stand from your roots in Eastern Europe, do you think you carry certain qualities for the resettlement.

**Abraham:** Well the only thing that you carry is poverty.

**Janet:** Poverty?

**Abraham:** That I know when I was hungry I know the other people were hungry too, and this is what made me do a lot of things, until this day. That I can’t make myself do things which I know others can do, to give you an idea my wife is as five years almost. I can’t make myself go for vacation.

**Janet:** Mmh.

**Abraham:** You know it’s hard to even explain it’s how you feel about it, that’s it.

**Janet:** Well, how is this time in your life, in your old aged time, what was it like for you?

**Abraham:** Well, I live I have a beautiful son, I have a beautiful daughter, she is a beautiful woman this Eleanor, I know through father. I didn’t know our father, our mother lives in my house.

**Janet:** This is Eleanor [unclear 00:44:18], who is here with you?

**Abraham:** Yeah, our father was a professor in Brookline college that’s all I know, nice expression, I mean a lot of compassion and feeling to work hard I mean you know, and that’s about it.

**Janet:** Do you feel there are certain things, maybe you said them already, but that you feel that you want to hand down?

**Abraham:** If could, I would.

**Janet:** It’s important to pass along.

**Abraham:** I speak to my son, he is alive, I talk to my daughter but as long as you live, you should live like a human being and leave your inheritance that you have somebody to look up to, it’s for your own good. When I do this thing not because of me, it’s for them, and I have the same for your feeling because you don’t know this for the managers, you do it because you believe in it, and that’s it.

**Janet:** Okay, well now how do you feel about coming back to Ellis Island, after 70 years.

**Abraham:** Well, it’s an experience, it’s a lot of remembrance your mother, your brother that’s gone, your sister that’s gone, and look family you know et cetera. I frankly she told me she made an appointment with you, I wouldn’t have come though, because it’s hard. I see my mother, anxious to see my father, you know my brothers that’s it.

**Janet:** Well, I’m very happy that you did come.

**Abraham:** Well I’m happy, I’m glad you are a nice person.

**Janet:** It’s been a pleasure talking with you, and this tape will now be on file for posterity you will have a copy and I thank you very much.

**Abraham:** I thank you, and I thank you for your time.

**Janet:** You are very welcome.

**Abraham:** You are a nice person, and I believe you will do your work, is because I did my work. You do not do it for the money, you do it because it’s history and I believe it’s important and that’s why I came here.

**Janet:** Wonderful, thank you. This is Janet Levine for the Park Service, I have been speaking with Abraham Honigman on February 5th 1995 and I’m signing off.