**Janet**: Today is November 9th 1995. I am here in Randolph Massachusetts with Maurice Kaufman who came from Poland when he was eight years of age in 1921.

**Maurice**: Right.

**Janet**: And today as of this interview Mr. Kaufman is 83 years of age. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. I think we can start if you would say your birth date again and where in Poland you were born.

**Maurice**: I was born in Poland in 1912 in the town of Ravna.

**Janet**: Okay. And you lived in Ravna up until the time-

**Maurice**: That we left for America.

**Janet**: Now do you have many memories of Ravna?

**Maurice**: Well the only memories I have is the house that we lived in -the horse lived in this side of our house that we owned. The dirt was red dirt because we had no roads.

So it was clay and I remember my mother putting out the dishes for the Passover to wash and clean they would put them out in the street and wash them and clean them and then put them out again. As a little kid that’s what I remember.

**Janet**: Where was your water coming from?

**Maurice**: The water was brought in. we had no running water. We had well water. We had to go and get it. The older boys would bring it back. I was too little to carry any of that. And that's the water we used. We had what they call storage water.

You keep it in tall cans with covers. Like milk cans-exactly. And water would get stale that would be tossed out. And we would get fresh water. That was the drinking water, the bathing water and the laundry water.

**Janet**: And do you remember the laundry? Do you remember your mother doing the laundry?

**Maurice**: No

**Janet**: You had a horse you said?

**Maurice**: Yes.

**Janet**: And what did you use the horse for?

**Maurice**: Well the horse was used-we had a little bit of land that we used to cultivate or dig or whatever. We did grow a few vegetables. We had no fruit trees these were in other homes not-everything was too close to each other we weren’t too far apart.

But that horse was mostly-I remember my brothers fooling around with it and that’s about it by I never did. I was too little. But I do remember that we never bought vegetables. We've potatoes, onions, and carrots all good stuff.

**Janet**: Did people ride the horse to go places?

**Maurice**: No I don’t remember anybody riding the horse. I don’t. But I knew we had a horse because I can remember that very clearly.

**Janet**: How did you get around town? How did you go-?

**Maurice**: We were-we weren’t in the town we were in the outskirts.

**Janet**: Well could you describe-the community where you live what do you remember about that? It was on the outskirts of a city?

**Maurice**: Yes. Ravna was a large city where you read in that paper-

**Janet**: Okay we are going to have that on file [unclear 00:03:37]

**Maurice**: You really will read it. We weren’t in the town we were in the outskirts. But we never got to town because everybody was very young. All the boys were young. My brothers my sister. And I was the youngest.

**Janet**: What’s was your mother's name?

**Maurice**: My mother Jewish name or English name? My mother's Jewish name was Chai Sora. CHAI SORA.

**Janet**: Okay.

**Maurice**: Chai is the definition life. Chai that was my mother. She was quite a lady.

**Janet**: Tell me about her, what do you remember about her when you were young?

**Maurice**: Very strict.

**Janet**: In what ways?

**Maurice**: You had to-there been no fooling around I mean everybody had a toe to mark. But when I was little when I really learned how my mother was when we came to this country. And the older boys would start to work.

My dad was in business. My dad had an antique shop on child street Boston. But none of us children went into it. But his brother lived in New York and he had an antique shop in 2nd Avenue new york.

**Janet**: Before we talk about this country, is there anything else about where you lived that you recall? Did you have grandparents?

**Maurice**: I had a grandmother. I had a grandfather and a grandmother. My grandfather was a peddler. Like he would go with pots and pans from town to town. My grandmother was a very strict lady.

She was very-she was not my mother's mother. She was my father's mother. And he-my grandfather and she did not live with us. But she was always visiting and she would come over. And she wasn’t in a good mood. She wouldn’t part with anything.

If she had food and she saw the kids coming she would hide it. She would put over her apron. I knew she got some good stuff as a little kid but I never got it. I don’t think my older brothers got it neither.

She was a grand old lady and when I came to this country I had an uncle. That was in the- well in later years he was in home for the age and he lived to be 117 years old. Yeah.

**Janet**: Oh wow.

**Maurice**: Well my dad-my mother was 98 when she died and my dad was 97. But they followed each other within 11 months. Because it got to the point that-my dad was a very good eater. He would eat anything and everything.

And when my mother died he decided not to eat anymore. That’s a normal of some marriages that were so long. But her was-she was a general. She was tough. She had to be she had a lot of boys. And she had to keep them all in control.

But she was good she knew when we all started making money each kid had a bank book.

**Janet**: Now this was-that was in this country?

**Maurice**: We are now in this country.

**Janet**: Yeah let’s just finish off-did you go to school at all when you were living in Poland?

**Maurice**: Yes yeah-in Poland no.

**Janet**: I want to get the names of your-what was your father's name?

**Maurice**: In Jewish or in English?

**Janet**: Both.

**Maurice**: In Jewish it was Suleiman in English Sam. my mother name was Chai soar in English Hyde.

**Janet**: And your brother can you remember from the oldest coming down?

**Maurice**: My oldest brother was name Reuben. My next brother was David. Then there was two brothers Max and Joe were twins. My sister. My brother Aving. That’s it.

**Janet**: And your sister's name?

**Maurice**: My sister’s name was Harriet.

**Janet**: Now when you were still in Poland was your family religious?

**Maurice**: We-well let’s put it this way I really don’t remember how religious but I knew one thing my mother kept the Sabbath. The candles were on the table that I remember. What I don’t remember how much religious she was.

She was not too educated my mother. But she didnt-thats in the old country she really-she had her hands full with all this boys. So there was no-we- I don’t remember what we ate that’s all I remember eating vegetables and-but other things-I don’t remember eating meat. Eating meat.

**Janet**: Do you remember any kinds of celebrations or events that happened in Poland?

**Maurice**: Well the celebration that would be was in our house. I don’t remember seeing any celebrations. I remember that my mother would have celebration of Hanika. You know she would make her own wax and she would pour it into little cups.

And make some bread put it together for a wig. Did you ever know how they make it? And she would light them that way we knew-I don’t remember any other holidays. I don’t remember going to the synagogue even. I don’t remember.

**Janet**: Were there mostly Jewish people living [unclear 00:09:35]

**Maurice**: In that community no there were very few in the area we lived. That’s where I got to know where the trees were where there were more people growing. As kid you ran around and I did that. I don’t remember anything about-what my mother-how she did everything how she managed. But she was strict. She was strict.

**Janet**: How would she be strict with you?

**Maurice**: Well, in the old country?

**Janet**: Yeah.

**Maurice**: Well I had to be beside her all the time. She didn’t let me out go her sight.

**Janet**: Did you have any chaos? I mean you were only eight-

**Maurice**: I was too little. Yeah I had no chaos. But the other boys the older boys that were home I think they had a lot of chaos but I never had any squabbling or anything. I never heard arguing in my mother's house. So I was a gifted person.

**Janet**: Now you said that your father-Oh Ravna was an army town?

**Maurice**: Yeah the barracks. The soldiers lived. They had barracks that are familiar right now with the high-rise apartments. That was a-Ravna actually was like a soldiers go from one town to another from one town to another. Maneuvering all the time. But we would see soldiers constantly, constantly.

**Janet**: These were now the polish Army?

**Maurice**: The polish army. And then when the polish Army would pull up you'd have renegades. You'd have-everybody wanted to become a hero. And the Jewish people did not have a chance. We did not have a chance.

**Janet**: What do you mean when you say that?

**Maurice**: Well everything got so tight we couldn’t get everything. My mother couldn’t get certain foods and we didn’t have it. We had-I remember one time there was a change of soldiers and my mother was working noodles by you know by hand and putting them through the flour.

And they ran into the house and they ate them raw. The soldiers ate that stuff raw. I remember I was somewhere in the house and I saw them.

**Janet**: Did you ever have any other contact with the soldiers?

**Maurice**: No my mother kept us away. There was no contact-she didn’t allow us to go up to the area where the soldiers, where the barracks were.

Me I remember not being allowed but the other boys I wouldn’t-I couldn’t answer for them. Because there were all bigger boys already.

**Janet**: Do you remember any experiences in Poland that involved any of your brothers? Or sister?

**Maurice**: No. I lost one brother. They grabbed him. I don’t know if I was seven years old. He was sitting in the kitchen table he was learning to be a tailor. And they came in and grabbed him we never saw him again.

**Janet**: The soldiers came in and grabbed him?

**Maurice**: Yes. Never saw him again. They grabbed him. Well several years ago you didn’t go into enlist. They ran around from town to town looking for the youth.

**Janet**: You think they took him into the army?

**Maurice**: Absolutely. And at the same time an uncle of mine disappeared. That was a brother to my mother. And they both diapered around the same time. And we never saw him again.

**Janet**: Did you encounter any anti-Semitism? From polish people?

**Maurice**: At times we-well I really don’t remember but my mother said it was time to get out.

**Janet**: Now you father had gone your father [unclear 00:13:45]-

**Maurice**: My father and my oldest brother came to this country.

**Janet**: When did they go?

**Maurice**: That I don’t remember. I don’t remember-

**Janet**: Do you remember your father from Poland? Do you remember him being there?

**Maurice**: No, oh no. I remember my father when I came to this country. And my oldest brother was with my father. But he-he ran away my oldest brother because they were going to grab him for the service. So he ran to this country.

Which were a normal thing people would do that. But I don’t remember the days or anything. I remember my father having a beard. And he couldn’t wear it after a while because they were making fun of him on the street calling him. He was telling me all that.

And he had to take it all off and he was very hurt. That he had to remove his beard. But now it’s a normal condition everybody get beards. Few years ago they didn’t allow it. But I had a very good life as a little kid. I mean we didn’t have much but there was-she was a general. She was something.

**Janet**: Do you remember what she wore or what your grandmother looked like?-

**Maurice**: I remember my grandmother wearing a facially. You know what that is on the head. She never went in with a bare head. And she would wear a long apron my grandmother.

And she had some goodies that she was eating outside the moment she would see some kids running she would cover everything over. There was no giving. She wasn’t the type to give. But my mother took everything very well. She was very strong woman. She was very strong.

**Janet**: How did the family get along when your father and brother were in the United States?

**Maurice**: Well we got along because my grandfather he helped. He helped. H brought a lot of stuff. Not telling his wife which is my grandmother. But he gave us. And then the rest of the stuff my mother would bake, cook-

**Janet**: Do you remember? Can you remember anything? Particular dishes that she'd make?

**Maurice**: Yeah I remember my mother making noodles herself. I remember her making bread. We never had rolls I didn’t know what rolls were. We had bread. We had a lot of potatoes and onions and carrots. That was turnip.

That was the main-fill yourself up with bread. We had no butter I never saw butter on the table. Milk yeah we had milk at times we had milk. But most times we didn’t have milk.

**Janet**: When your grandfather went around with pots and pans and all that what was his means of transportation?

**Maurice**: He had a wagon.

**Janet**: A horse drawn wagon?

**Maurice**: With a horse drawn wagon. He had a shortcut beard; he was a very handsome man.

**Janet**: Did you ever go with him?

**Maurice**: No I remember him. I remember pulling up to the house. Stopping and she would be there out first my grandmother to see what he brought. Because it shouldn’t go anywhere else. She was really something.

But the kids I don’t think we all had much to do with her. She was a grandmother but she wasn’t a good grandmother. There are all kinds of grandmothers. There is good ones and bad ones.

**Janet**: Do you know why it was decided that you would come to the United States when-

**Maurice**: Wham my mother felt-she had very-she thought something was going to happen. And when you read this paper that I got here you will know how she smelled it.

**Janet**: Why don’t you say it for the tape it would be good to hear?

**Maurice**: Pardon?

**Janet**: If you could say it for the tape, so it would be on tape that’s all.

**Maurice**: Well she felt that we had to get out. And that we would be in trouble. So we did get one visa and somehow we didn’t get it.

Then my father-my father was still able to send us a little money. And American money was pretty good it was pretty valuable. And she just didn’t-she felt that we going to get out and leave everything intact.

**Janet**: Now did you have like a separate house where you lived?

**Maurice**: We lived in a little house with a barn next door. No closer. The horse and the family open. We had maybe in the house-I don’t remember too much about the sleeping or-I knew the winters were very, very bad. Very, very bad.

Sometimes the snow would really be high and you couldn’t see the house even. But she had everything-she had a loft you know what a loft is? And she would put potatoes and onions and she would spread them out. And then we had that. But we didn’t have-I don’t remember meat.

I remember chickens. We had a few chickens. And did have any eggs. She never had producing chickens my mother she just had edibles which they don’t produce eggs.

**Janet**: So-when you were about to leave what happened with the house?

**Maurice**: We left everything intact.

**Janet**: You just left?

**Maurice**: Just left. My mother said let’s get out of here. And we just left. We left everything. But the grandparents were already gone.

**Janet**: Do you remember anything your mother packed to take with her to the new country?

**Maurice**: I remember we-I don’t think we had maybe two suitcases and what was on our back. But we-when we left we didn’t go direct to America from Ravna.

**Janet**: Do you remember leaving Ravna?

**Maurice**: Yes

**Janet**: What was that like the departure from the town you lived in?

**Maurice**: Well we got out in a sneaky way. Nobody was told that we were going to leave. And the word was not to talk about it.

**Janet**: Now why was that?

**Maurice**: My mother was scared of the neighbor. Because the neighbors were getting-everyone was getting very restless as you will read in this what happened.

A she thought it was time to get out. And she got us out. We went-from Ravna we went to Dazing. We crossed over from Danzig we went to England London.

**Janet**: It was your mother, five brothers-

**Maurice**: My mother, my sister and my brothers.

**Janet**: And were you travelling with anyone else-

**Maurice**: Nobody else. When we got to London we had to wait quite a while there till we got cleared out. But she had accumulated some-I don’t know how she did it but she lived very well in London.

**Janet**: Did you stay in London for a while?

**Maurice**: We stayed in London for 6weeks.

**Janet**: Oh and where did you stay then?

**Maurice**: And we stood at the Dorchester Hotel. Which is still in London?

**Janet**: What do you remember about that time those six weeks?

**Maurice**: I have a good memory. And then she went the time came to go she got us on aboard ship. And we were third class.

**Janet**: Do you remember anything about London that struck you as a little boy?

**Maurice**: No, no, no.

**Janet**: So when you-she got you board the ship, did you have any examinations at that end?

**Maurice**: No. we got aboard ship we were told where we were living. We were living down below. Way down below steerage. And I remember how the food used to come down in a [unclear 00:22:42] like a little- We got food-but I remember that I was sick and all my other brothers except one of my brothers. He was well the whole time.

**Janet**: Which one was that?

**Maurice**: My brother Dave. He was very, he was strong. But the rest of us were sick. We came here-

**Janet**: Before you get to this country can you describe the accommodations in steerage?

**Maurice**: Very cramped. You could figure out like when you took a cruise now that was to be two beds or whatever that was for us for all of us. So kids were on the floor. Kids were out the corridor. But it was a long trip it was 15days at sea.

**Janet**: What were the beds was there-

**Maurice**: Bunks. Hanging from the side of the-just like they have now if you go in certain cruises you have an upper [unclear 00:23:49] and a lower [unclear 00:23:50] and those were only two there. But she had made room on the floor-I don’t know how she got blankets and things.

But she was aggressive. She knew how to get around. And we got here-crossing was very bad. I don’t know it was a time of the year that it should have been pretty good. But we were so down low that we wouldn’t feel anything.

**Janet**: You didn’t even go up on deck?

**Maurice**: We went up on deck-I don’t remember being up on deck. I think my brothers went up. I don’t remember being up at all. I remember just when we were getting off.

**Janet**: Tell me what it was like when the ship-the Aquitania came into the New York harbor?

**Maurice**: When she came into the New York harbor they were shooting fire crackers. And I dint know what was going on I was close to my mother. And my other brothers we all thought we were backing home. And got to see shooting and all that. Then we were told it was a celebration.

**Janet**: What’s celebration?

**Maurice**: July the 4th. So we landed in Ellis Island and we were put in bins. We had to go through the bins for-but my mother she bought in London mesh underwear. You know what mesh underwear is?

**Janet**: Not really.

**Maurice**: Underwear with little holes in it like. So we are clean. And we were clean. We went to physical exams and-

**Janet**: Do you remember anything about the physical that you had?

**Maurice**: No.

**Janet**: And how long did you stay in Ellis Island?

**Maurice**: In Ellis Island I think we stood two days.

**Janet**: So then how did you sleep at night or where did you sleep?

**Maurice**: They had accommodations.

**Janet**: So you were in a room?

**Maurice**: You had to stay until if you passed the exams and everything. You had to wait for the person that signed for you to get into this country. My oldest brother came and my father to New York and he took us off Ellis Island.

**Janet**: I see did you also go to the dining room there?

**Maurice**: Where?

**Janet**: At Ellis Island?

**Maurice**: No we got food on. I don’t know how we got food. But somehow my mother had food. I don’t remember being in a dining room. I don’t remember.

**Janet**: Is there anything else you can think of about Ellis Island or anything that happened in Ellis Island?

**Maurice**: really not a. I couldn’t remember. I would remember people walking people lots of traffic. But I dint remember anything else.

**Janet**: And what was it like when your brother and father came here?

**Maurice**: He took us out. My brother and father. They brought fruit and all goodies. We saw things that we didn’t have and took us into a restaurant then we took a train. From New York we came to Boston. We went to-I had an aunt and uncle in Harrison Avenue.

My mother’s brother they lived in a street called Seneca street. And it was tenement. And we all went there. My aunt and my father got-he got us an apartment where he was living. We had a house already now we didn’t own it but we lived in a- but eventually my dad bought a house.

But most of the boys when they grew older they all started to earn. And nobody saw the money but her.

**Janet**: Tell me about some of the things that you saw during those first days in this country that was new and different for you?

**Maurice**: In America? Well I was too little to really realize but there was so much good things because my aunt and my mother's brother they already had a business here. SO they had a lot of good food.

**Janet**: What kinds of foods did you encounter do you remember?

**Maurice**: No. I remember-no I can’t remember what I ate. I remember it was all edible. But we kids didn’t know the difference we ate everything and even then when my mother set up housekeeping of her own.

My father he was that sort of a man he never came home without anything he always had a shopping bag. And he keeps bringing this and that. But my mother-she had a lot of respect for my father. He was the king.

We could not sit down to eat till he washed his hands and ate. It was a good house-I was brought up in a very good home. With nothing.

**Janet**: What was it like for being around your father?

**Maurice**: Well I went to school.

**Janet**: You started school anyway

**Maurice**: Started school-no I couldn’t start when we were living in in Harrison Avenue. When we came to live in [unclear 00:29:26] I started school right away. My mother brought me to school she couldn’t talk a word of English.

But she communicated with him people that she wanted me in school. But I started school. Then we moved to Dorchester. I was getting old already and I went to a school called the [unclear 00:29:47] on Glen way street.

**Janet**: What grade were you by then when you went to Dorchester?

**Maurice**: I don’t remember the grade

**Janet**: Do you remember any of your teachers when first came over?

**Maurice**: No, no. But I remember I liked where I was.

**Janet**: How was learning English for you?

**Maurice**: Very easy. My mother wanted to learn English but she did allow us to talk too much and write.

**Janet**: So in the home when you were in Poland you were speaking in?

**Maurice**: Yiddish.

**Janet**: Yiddish at the home

**Maurice**: In the house all Yiddish. My mother spoke polish fluently. My sister she went to high school in Russia so she was very learned. But we weren’t they boys. She went to high school. She graduated high school.

**Janet**: Now why did she go to Russia?

**Maurice**: No I mean in Ravens she was going- but she went like to grammar school then she graduated to high school. But she kept that up even when she came to this country she spoke Russian fluently. She could speak polish.

You see polish and Russian is very similar. If somebody was speaking Russian very slowly I would understand it. But I couldn’t answer them. But she could understand it she could write it, she answered it so she was more educated.

**Janet**: Why was it that it was your sister your one sister who got more education?

**Maurice**: Never knew.

**Janet**: That’s unusual usually it’s the boy that gets the more [unclear 00:31:35]

**Maurice**: I never knew, I never knew. My brothers none of them. They go themselves even when they came to this country they all worked and they all right away started to provide. But they were all home. She was too strict. She wouldn’t let anybody go.

**Janet**: Did your mother treat you sister any differently?

**Maurice**: Any different-no. My sister was-she was a good person. And she was close but sometimes not too close to my mother. In later years but in the early years she was a good person. She had problems which everybody has. But she came to this country she worked. She had two sons.

**Janet**: When you finished school-

**Maurice**: I went to work very early.

**Janet**: Why was it you went to work?

**Maurice**: Well I saw things that I wanted that I couldn’t have unless I earned. So I went to work for Swift Company at a very early age and I learned the meat cutting business. And I worked for Swift Company for a while but I started working for somebody else there was no money.

So I went in business for myself. And I opened up a meat market. And I-here we are at Dorchester by me. And things were pretty good. So I kept staying in the business for a while then my two brothers had also a meat market elsewhere. And they weren’t doing too well so, me foolishly closed my store and went in with them. Which was the greatest mistake of my life?

And we were together for over 20 years. After I left them I didn’t open I bought a meat market in Winthrop. And I ran it for myself for 27years. I was in business 47 years. All by myself 27 and 20 with two partner. But well some of that is water under over the dam. Which is not nice to talk about?

**Janet**: Okay and how did you meet you wife?

**Maurice**: Well my wife lived next door to me where I lived in Dorchester. This lady is my second wife. My first wife died. She died November the 20th. Many years ago.

**Janet**: And did you have-you did have children-what was your first wife's name and maiden name?

**Maurice**: My first wife's name was Anna. Her maiden name was Philips.

**Janet**: And your children's names?

**Maurice**: My children I have one son, Milton. I have a son Earn and my daughter Dorothy. I have three children. Very good kids.

**Janet**: Did you and your family maintain ties with people from Poland when you got to this country?

**Maurice**: No, no, never. Never met anybody else. The only person I met that had any idea of-this man that got me this information from Poland would be sitting next-back of me in the temple. And he had me praying and he turned around one day and he told me 'I say yeah from?' and he told me I says yes I do.

I said how do you know? He says I came from there with my brother. But never knew them. Then he says you know some day I am going to get you something. What happened to the town that you lived-in?

And I didn’t hear for a long time and one day the phone rang and he said come over to the house I got something for you and that’s when he brought me this copy. Which his brother got out of Israel.

**Janet**: Now how did he know when he heard you praying? How did he know that you were [unclear 00:36:07?]

**Maurice**: Well you know there are two different-some people pronounce the Hebrew one way and some do another way. You see there is [unclear 00:36:17] which I am. And then there is another one they pray the same it’s just like orthodox and reformed.

You go to reformed temple before you look around you go home. You into an orthodox temple you can sit my dad would sit there wouldn’t let us out until the last minute because when we all came in his for would go up and the gate was closed. So we had to stay put. But he was very smart my dad. He knew when to leave and go.

**Janet**: Where there any kinds of attitudes or ideas that your mother and father tried to instill in you?

**Maurice**: What do you mean by that?

**Janet**: I mean did they have certain ways they wanted you to be?

**Maurice**: No, oh no. that went on-that never went on in my mother house. She was very strict but she did not lay down any rules that we had to follow.

The only rule we had to follow is bring the envelope home unopened. That was it there was no-she would-I don’t remember my brothers ever being told or anything.

**Janet**: Well the story you told me earlier about the plum tree?

**Maurice**: Yes the plum-that was next door where we lived and I saw those plums and my mouth was watering. And I figured maybe if I can have a little. And I got them but she caught me the lady. And she beat the hell out of me not face or anything.

And then when I got home I got the rest of it from my mother. And the woman was right she had told my mother that if he wants anything or any of the kids come over and we will give it to you. But I didn’t know that.

So I did something which was-which I will never do again in my life. Because I only lived by one rule. There is no other way with me it’s either the honest way or nothing. I cannot tolerate a lair. Because to be a lair you got be very smart. You got to remember two things the truth and the lie.

If you can’t remember both things then you can’t be a liar. And I had a brother I still have them let them be well. That’s all I got left its one brother. And he is a liar, one of the biggest in the world.

But I tolerate him because this wife she likes peace so she made me go to him. I would never go to him. I really wouldn’t. it’s a terrible thing to say but I don’t like bragging people I don’t like you telling me what you have got and what I haven’t got.

Who cares what you've got. You didn’t give it to me. I don’t believe in taking anything from anybody. Maybe that’s why I am just, I am getting by. And I am happier than they are maybe. I have got much but I don’t care. I can go out and do and associate. I haven’t got any-too many Jewish friends.

**Janet**: Why is that?

**Maurice**: I don’t know. I hang around in the coffee shop in the center of win trap and I am the only Jewish fellow there. They are all very fine people they are gentiles.

They respect me I respect them. Even when they don’t see me they call the house. And they are all younger people. I am the grand man of all of them. But I love what I am doing.

**Janet**: Why don’t you tell your present wife's name and maiden name?

**Maurice**: My present wife maiden name is Foreman. Her name is Ida foreman. She was born in Maine. She was born in Oban Maine. And we have a very good marriage. Everything is just wonderful. I am happy and I have everything that I need and I got good kids.

**Janet**: I was going to ask you-was your mother and father have the attitude that they wanted to become American or did they want more to hold on to the old ways of the old country?

**Maurice**: Did want it at all. Wanted to be here. My dad especially-when my dad was in a very fine business. I remember as a young man already Governor Fuller was then governor of Massachusetts and my dad was designated to but furniture for his home because my dad was a very, very good authority on furniture. He was a cabinet marker by trade. And then his became-he had a store called in Charles Street 'Charlie Anderson Company'. But my father kept the Sabbath.

**Janet**: Now you said earlier your father also had an antique shop? That was it?

**Maurice**: That was the store. Yes and he would never work on the Sabbath. He would close like 3oclock and open Monday. And they respected him. And I lived by the same rule.

I don’t I would not belittle anybody. If your belief is that I go along with you. But people know when it’s my holiday and I know when it’s there holiday.

**Janet**: As an eight year of with your family and immigrated do you think that affected the person you became? The fact that you had moved to this country and changed your life-

**Maurice**: No, no, no. I was too young. What I believed when I-as I got older to live by one rule. Don’t take anything from anybody unless it’s yours. That’s my belief and I live by that rule. And I don’t envy people I don’t care what somebody else has if there have more than me. I have more than them in certain other things.

**Janet**: What’s do you feel proud of? Or what do you feel satisfied about [unclear 00:42:46]

**Maurice**: Well I am alive and well. And I have a nice wife and I have a nice home. What else can you ask for s a person? I have everything. Lots of people don’t have anything.

You know a lot of people got everything but they think they haven’t got enough. They are jealous. Those are not well people they are sick. Somebody has a beautiful home good luck with them who cares. You got a millions dollars it’s not mine. But everybody doesn’t believe that way. Everybody in this world that we live in is greedy, is [unclear 00:43:27] and I wouldn’t want to-I think I live my life the way I would like it.

I wouldn’t care. If I lived over again I wouldn’t ask for anything more. I got a good family and good kids I got good grandchildren. Beautiful grandchildren. So what does a guy want more?

**Janet**: Well you mentioned before we started that your name-when you started out was something else. Would you tell us about that? The change in your last name?

**Maurice**: Well they changed it at the-when we got to Ellis Island it seemed that the inspector that was processing us changed the name to make it easier for him to write it or spell it out. We asked-I think my mother did all of the talking.

I do not remember how when or why. But I do remember when I came to this country and my father told me I knew I had an uncle here. And his name was Stoffman. STOFFMAN. So I said to my father how come [unclear 00:44:34] and his stoffman.

**Janet**: And why don’t you say on the tape what your name was when you started?

**Maurice**: When we left Poland [Unclear 00:44:43] that’s what it was. But when I came here I became I citizen when I married my wife. She was a citizen. So years ago if your wife was a citizen you automatically would go to get the swearing in and you became a citizen.

**Janet**: What year was that when you were married? Let’s see July 16th 1935.

**Maurice**: Yes.

**Janet**: Now do you remember the depression? Did the depression in this country hit you personally?

**Maurice**: No. no. it didn’t hurt us. We had everything. I mean we didn’t have abundant of stuff but we had mostly everything. We had-my dad was a good provider. And then when the boys started earning money. And everybody really had a bank book. I mean it was much but my mother-

**Janet**: Tell us about the bank books.

**Maurice**: Well I worked in swift company; we were getting paid in cash. So I thought one time that I would open up the envelope and take out $2. And I did I came home gave my mother the envelope everybody did.

And when gave her the envelope she didn’t say anything. But later in the afternoon she called me in the side and I felt her hand right across my face. She said if you ever want any money you ask never take it again.

And that was the greatest lesson I ever learned. And I took that with me for the rest of my life. That you can’t outsmart a smart woman. And she was smart [laughter]. You like that?

**Janet**: Yes.

**Maurice**: She really was. What else can I tell you I told you my whole life?

**Janet**: Let’s see I am sure there is more. Well how is this time in your life? Now that you’re retired?

**Maurice**: Now?

**Janet**: Yeah.

**Maurice**: I want to tell you something misses. This are the best days of my life.

**Janet**: In what ways?

**Maurice**: I have everything I need, I but what I want; I can go where I want to go. And I can help. If God forbid [unclear 00:47:16] we are right there my wife and I.

**S**o how much more can you want? You can only wear one pair of shoe wear anymore you would look like a freak. I have everything I really have no want. [Unclear 00:47:33].

**Janet**: Where there heroes that you've had-heroes are people that you looked up to that you can recall-

**Maurice**: I only looked up to one person-my oldest brother.

**Janet**: Which one was that?

**Maurice**: My brother Reuben. He died he was about 90 years old. He was a very fine person.

**Janet**: What was it about him that you really admired?

**Maurice**: Goodness. He was such a good person. He loved to live. He loved to go places. He would dress beautifully he was handsome man. He lived nice he had a nice home. But he was something. Because when we used to pick him up to go out to eat my brother couldn’t read or write.

And he was in business in this country. And he sat beside you in the restaurant and when you picked up the menu he would get close to you and look and say ‘what looks good to you I think it looks good to me too. And he would say you going to order that I will order the same thing I think it looks good.

You see that’s how a smart person doesn’t become Boisterous he just become calm and he makes a section. But everybody has faults I have faults I am not perfect by any means. I am far from perfect. But everybody got certain faults.

If we were all that perfect there would be something wrong here. So I can’t speak for you I don’t know you. I have my ways. I have sometimes good days and sometimes bad days. I do have bad days. Which I can’t help. I don’t know why.

**Janet**: When you say bad days what do you mean?

**Maurice**: Someday nothing bothers me and someday nothing bother me but I bother other people and little ways they it shouldn’t happen. And they do happen. I can’t do anything about it. Maybe I am getting senile but I don’t think so.

**Janet**: I don’t think so.

**Maurice**: I don’t think so but I get a little bit of hard of hearing to me have tell people sometimes talk a little louder or get on the left side of me. My left side is better than my right. I turn on the television a little louder I can’t hear it.

But otherwise I walk everyday-I walk every day from about 6.30 in the morning. [Unclear 00:50:19] drive the car, go anywhere. So what else can I ask? I am very happy. I don’t want anything else. I just want everybody to be well. And go along with what they are doing.

As long as they kids are all well let them be well I mean they are not taking nothing from me. But you got to be lucky for a lot of things. Sometimes you strike it but if I am going to die I have no conscience. Nothing is-I don’t feel that I ever did anything to hurt people. That is the story of my life.

**Janet**: Maybe we should end right there. I think that’s perfect.

**Maurice**: Thank you.

**Janet**: Okay thank you. This is Janet Levine I have been speaking with Maurice Kaufman-

**Maurice**: I have it right here.

**Janet**: And I am going to have a number of papers on file with this tape. And it’s November 9th 1995. We are here in Randolph Massachusetts. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I am signing off.