**Janet**: Today is September 15th 1996. I am here at Canton Ohio with Mrs. Esther Klausner who came from what was Czechoslovakia after world war one in 1920 when she was eight years of age. Today Mrs. Klausner is 84 years of age and this is Janet Levine for the National Park service. Okay if we could start from the beginning if you could tell me where you were born?

**Esther**: Well I was born in a small village called Hnusovce. Now I have that written down. I will go get that and I will spell it for you.

**Janet**: You got the mic on me am going to have to unhook you

**Esther**: Well alright. Go where my telephone is in the kitchen there is little red [unclear 00:01:00] I came from.

**Janet**: Okay we are resuming here.

**Esther**: The town I was born in was called H-N-U-S-O-V-C-E. And that was pronounced Hnusovce.

**Janet**: And did your live in Hnusove until you left for America?

**Esther**: Right. Always lived there. And my grandparents lived there. And in a village not too much from there called B-Y-S-T-R-A my paternal grandparents lived in that village. So we were like maybe 6-8 miles apart.

**Janet**: Did you have a lot of contact with those grandparents.

**Esther**: Well until I was eight years old yes. Till I left Europe. When I left that country that it was at during worked war one. My parents’ home was taken by the government to build soldiers and we lived with my grandmother. My grandfather was gone by then. My grandmother name was Hausner H-A-U-S-N-E-R. Her name was sally. And that was my mother's mother.

**Janet**: Why don’t you say your birthdate for the tape?

**Esther**: They are different dates on which my birthday is because when we came here on my passport was one day but anyhow I have been using March 17th- 3-17-12.

**Janet**: And why the mix up and why the-

**Esther**: Because when I started school in canton Ohio my father gave them one date then later on when n I sent for some information to Czechoslovakia I wanted to know some stuff. They-the immigration office in Washington DC gave me the name and place where I can send for information which I did.

And they wrote at that point they were communist. So they sent me all the information that I wanted. For different dates and they had they had a different date for my birthday see. So we are on middle ground do to speak. I am still in the same month in the same year but somehow either the dates got confused.

It was a holiday time for the Jewish people. And I knew that when I was a little girl they used to always say I was born on this holiday and that’s why my name was Esther. Because it was the day before [unclear 00:04:58] and the day was called Esthertonest. Was named after Queen Esther this holiday.

So that always came in March. So therefore I know the birth date is the right birthday but maybe not exactly the right dates. So in order to change everything it was whole big to do so I just kept the birthday that I started school with.

**Janet**: And maybe you can talk a little about where you came from was Austria Hungry when you were born?

**Esther**: Yes I was. But see when the world war started in 1918 I was six right? From 12-18 is six.

**Janet**: Yeah actually it started in 1914-

**Esther**: Yeah it did. I am trying to think. It started in 1914. I was two years old and I can’t remember stuff rom when I was two but I can remember my family talking about this because in 1914 my father who was Edward Klausner immigrated to the united states.

**Janet**: So you were just born practically?

**Esther**: Yeah I was two years old so I couldn’t remember him at all except form a picture. And during the war as I said my mother had five children to take care of without a husband.

Because my father came here and he used to get mail from the Hungarian army to come back and serve. Because he had served in the army everybody had to it was scripted at one time or another. But he would not leave the United States at that point and come back.

**Janet**: Do you know why it was that your father left?

**Esther**: Yes because he had brothers in [unclear 00:07:12] and sister here in the United States. And several of my mother's brothers were here in Ohio. And they encouraged him to come. And at that point he decided he would go and see how things were and then bring out family. But then the war came see?

**Janet**: I see so when he left was part of his reason for leaving to avoid going back to the Hungarian army do you think [unclear 00:07:48]

**Esther**: No I think what he-that was before the war broke out. The war broke out in July and I think he came here in April or May of that year. But however it was in May of that year that the head of the Hungarian army was assassinated and then they started the war.

Now this I learned in American history and of course in my parent’s conversations and different hinges like that and my aunts and uncles. Because both my father and father came from very large families. Children of nine and eleven you know. So we had a lot of relatives.

**Janet**: What was your mother name?

**Esther**: Gosh when we came here-

**Janet**: Before we talk about when you came here if you could say a little bit about like how did she get along when your father was here?

**Esther**: During the war we moved to-and my oldest brother-it was hard. I remembered it being hard but I cold ember my oldest brother was seven years older than I so that meant at that point he was-when I was two so he had to be nine. And my grandmother had a home and we all lived together with my grandmother.

**Janet**: What do you remember about your grandmother?

**Esther**: I remember that she was a very kind hearted lady. And today's terms she would look old but she was not that old because-a very sweet and kind lady. And I know if you know anything about Jewish life the Sabbath is very holy.

And my grandmother used to bake what we called the [unclear 00:10:16] and its egg bread. Braided egg bread. You would put it in any market today but-

**Janet**: Yeah I have made it actually.

**Esther**: Yeah have you. Anyhow. If you were sick she would save some of the white egg bread to give you a treat. Otherwise we most ate like dark white bread. And I think they had to bake all that because we were not close to a city to go and but those things. And I remember playing with some little girls.

One of them was cousin to my father. And I remembered going to Hebrew school. Because you start at a very young age and we had a synagogue that was not too far from where we lived so the little children would walk with the older children. And we had a regular school. And after school they would teach Hebrew.

It was a [unclear 00:11:33] school at that point where I could remember it so we learned [unclear 00:11:40] and the Hebrew. And there was a-he was a Jewish teacher so he taught both things. In fact I think his name was-his teacher name was Mr. Clain. And you know at that point when I was 4, 5, 6 years old he was an old man you know he was a teacher. Must have been in his 20s.

And I do remember that and then I remember during the war when we lived at my grandmother house that lived further down the street. Now they house was not take to build the soldier because they had a family. And they were father mother and a family. I don’t know why they didn’t ask them to move but they did ask us to move.

Maybe because my grandmother lived nearby and they needed-I guess they needed room for the soldiers. And my brother my oldest brother I know used to go to the river that ran through his town and he would go fishing. And very often our meals were fish meals. And to this day I detest fish I won’t touch it.

Any cooked fish I can’t stand the smell of it and I think it did me in when I was a little girl [laughter]. What else can I tell you about? We used to play with different people-

**Janet**: Do you remember any of the games or kinds of things you did when you played?

**Esther**: I think we used to play a game like tag you know. I don’t know what they called it then. I know we used to run in the fields and play with other children.

**Janet**: Were you closest to any particular family member?

**Esther**: Well my entire brother was very dear to me. It’s as we got older then we-they move here and they moved there from-they lived in canton see? And then as they for older and wanted to work. When we came here my father had a business. The uncle that came to bring us was my mother brother.

And my father had enough money to buy passports for the five children and my mother. My uncle who had been I world war one was not allowed to go to Czechoslovakia to see his parents or his mother unit he was discharged to the service. So he had to come back to the United States, get an honorary discharge and then made arrangements to go back to Europe. And of course he had to sail because there was not flying in those days.

**Janet**: So this uncle what was his name?

**Esther**: His name was Aving Hausner.

**Janet**: And he had come to this country early?

**Esther**: Yes as he was a young bot yeah.

**Janet**: And he had become an American citizen?

**Esther**: Right. See that’s what happened with a lot of our family. My mother’s-some of my mother family and some of my father family had come maybe in 1910-12. They were young men. One of my uncles was only 14 when he came here. And never got to see his parents again.

**Janet**: How was it that they happened to settle in Canton in Ohio?

**Esther**: Because my mother's brother -one was in Cleveland and the one that offered my father a job to work with him was in canton.

**Janet**: I see do you have any idea why they originally came to Ohio rather than some [unclear 00:16:39]

**Esther**: Well I think they had family here that had left Europe many years before and had settled in Cleveland. One family led to another family you know. Anyway this one uncle his name was Leopold Hauser. And he had business in canton and when we came here my father was in business with him.

My uncle had a clothing store on the east side of canton and my father had a grocery store. And when we came to Ohio from Ellis Island we came directly to canton. And my father picked us up in a horse and baggie. That he had borrowed from somebody to pick up his family. And when he had the store he used to deliver groceries and meats on a wagon that was a horse and a wagon.

My oldest brother used to help him. Because at that point when he came in 1920-he was born in 1905 so he was 15 see? And he used to help my father in the store. And my oldest sister used to help in the house because she was five years older than I was.

**Janet**: What had your father done for work when he was in Czechoslovakia before he came here?

**Esther**: Let’s see what did he do? Hi parents owned a salon in the small town not far from us. And I think he went as an apprentice to an uncle in Budapest to learn the grocery business. And that how when he came here-I guess he must have had the apprenticeship and probably helped his parents in the salon when he was a boy because that’s what the children did you know they helped their parents.

And by the time he came here he evidently want doing very well or he wouldn’t have left. He probably felt he would do better here and my uncles used to write and tell him come and bring your family. Its more prosperous here and all that.

So that’s why he immigrated here. But he couldn’t afford to bring his family with him. So he really came to see if he can earn enough money to send for his family which he did.

**Janet**: Do you personally remember anything that occurred during world war one?

**Esther**: Couple of instances-I remember the soldiers coming through town and with canons-the canons were on wheels. I remember that and on the main street. And I remember one of my uncles who lived in-oh I am trying to think of the town. But he lived-it was my mother brother his name was Julius Hausner.

And he had to go to war. And he was wounded. And I remember him coming to my grandmother to convulse. So I remember that because that was a big event for my uncle to be wounded and to come there to convulses

**Janet**: And what was his name that uncle?

**Esther**: His name was Julius Hausner.

**Janet**: And do you remember any experiences or any anecdotes or things that happened with that uncle.

**Esther**: No. he came and he was just-at my grandma's and everybody in the family tried to help to take care of him till he got better. And he had a wife and children too. And later on in life his-yeah I think his children eventually one of them ended up in Israel. And I think some of his family-his daughter was the one that lived in Switzerland I think for a while.

**Janet**: And how about your grandmother you mentioned she was a kind-

**Esther**: Oh kind sweet lady. Very kind sweet lady.

**Janet**: Can you remember any incidents with her? Anything’s maybe she did or [unclear 00:21:56]

**Esther**: Well you know she cooked and she baked and she was very good to all of us children was very good. And not one particular incident stands out for me but I know all of our family just loved her when we were little kids.

**Janet**: How about religious life of the family do you remember?

**Esther**: Yes we all had to attend a Hebrew school and on the Sabbath we went to the synagogue. Everybody would get dressed up and go to the synagogue. Some of our Jewish holidays are more like festivals.

I remember one in a particular in the spring was called [unclear 00:22:48] and that holiday was a when they were lilacs all around out house. And they used to bring the lilacs in the house. I remember that. Always when that holiday comes I think of those lilacs and the smell of lilacs.

I forget what they called that holiday in English I think the feast of weeks? In English. Anyhow it was on the time that the flowers would bloom. And that holiday always reminds me that I remember as a little girl we always had lilacs in the house from my grandma's yard.

**Janet**: Any other festivals or ritual that you remember from Czechoslovakia?

**Esther**: I remember some of the Passover holidays. And then the fall like we are now coming to after the [unclear 00:23:59] which is next week. There is a holiday called [unclear00:24: 08] where they build the buse. And they still do here in the synagogue they still does that.

And I remember we used to eat in that [unclear 00:24:21] that buse. We used to eat in there every night during that week of that holiday. I remember that my grandmother used to bring the [unclear 00:24:31] form the house into the [unclear 00:24:34] where we all ate our meals during the holiday.

**Janet**: Do you remember how the [unclear 00:24:39] was decorated? What was on the walls of it or was anything brought into-

**Esther**: Yeah and they used to have leaves and flowers. Whatever vegetation was in the area guess they used to decorate that [unclear 00:25:56] with that.

**Janet**: And how about the Jewish community in the village was you were. Was it all Jewish or-

**Esther**: No, no we had a lot of gentile people around us. It was not Jewish at all. We had lots of gentile neighbors. Some were very friendly and I remember before I left somehow rather I remember that they used to tell us-some of those young people didn’t like Jews. You know not to befriend them.

Or not to be friends with them they didn’t like Jews. But what they names were anything like that I don’t remember. But they were a lot of gentile people that were very good friends with our family.

**Janet**: So did you personally experience any anti-Semitism?

**Esther**: No not that I remember. I experience more here as a little girl than I did there. Because then I was old enough to remember but I didn’t remember if I did I don’t remember.

**Janet**: And how about food that you remember from a little girl in Czechoslovakia? Do you remember any particular kinds of dishes-well you said the [unclear 00:26:17] and the raw bread anything else that you recall/

**Esther**: Well they used to make chicken and they would make a roast. But I don’t remember too well just what they were you know? And fish we had lots of fish. Because during the war years you could hardly but guess meat because everything went the army.

But we did have chicken I know on the Sabbath we generally had chicken and soup. And everybody made they own noodles we didn’t but anything like noodles.

**Janet**: Do you remember-was there a market place were there shops or do you remember anything about that?

**Esther**: No I don’t remember but there evidently were places-either they had like a farmers market somewhere but I don’t remember because I don’t think I ever went. It was adults who went to get this food.

And to this day-and I often thought about that-and I should have asked some of my uncles who would remember or my oldest brother remembered a lot too. But now my oldest brother and my sister are gone.

They would remember more than I would you know. But I don’t remember they evidently had to be a place and a lot of people grew stuff in their yards had gardens. Because I remember having green onions that were picked out of the garden so I guess we must have had a garden around the house somewhere.

**Janet**: And what did you speak at home? What language did you speak at home?

**Esther**: Hungarian and Yiddish. And our Yiddish was more like German. Because that part of the country that’s the way they spoke. When I was a little girl I could speak Hungarian, Yiddish, German and slavish.

But see when came here my father said you children have to learn English. So when you talk to me you have to speak to me and I will answer you in English so you will know hat language you are talking about because he thought that was very important for us if we were going to live here we were going to learn to read and write in English.

**Janet**: So initially you were speaking to him in [unclear 00:28:50}

**Esther**: Well yes sure.

**Janet**: And he was returning it in [unclear 00:28:54]-

**Esther**: Yes uhuh. And it wasn’t too long-you know I was eight years old in the first grade I was put in the first grade-it wasn’t too long you pick it up. And I never went beyond the 8th grade in high school. I mean in school here. Because at that point I went as a freshman in high school. I was going on age 16.

And my family needed help at home and my sister had been helping at home. And so I had-I went the freshman year in high school in canton. And then after my freshman year I had to drop out of school and help at home. I learned how to cook and bake at a very early age. And my younger brother-the one that was younger than I we were a year and a half apart-he went to high school here.

And my youngest brother who was born here went to high school and college and became a doctor. Right. And everybody who was working in our family my sister and my older brother-everybody helped to keep our household going so that my youngest brother Joe could go to college. See that was an achievement. In 1939 he went.

**Janet**: So let’s see do you remember when the family was getting ready to come to this country? Do you remember preparations to leave? What you might have packed? Any of those kinds of things?

**Esther**: Well she packed our clothes whatever we had. My uncle helped him to bring whatever we had. And you know I was too little to really look and see what she was bringing. Once I had a dress to wear and she used to put on you know.

**Janet**: And do you remember before you left? Do you remember saying goodbye?

**Esther**: Oh yes that was a very-that stuck in my mind for a long time. We left to go to larger city that was not too far from us where we got on a train. I had never been on a train before. And the goodbyes to my aunt and uncles who were in the area and to my grandmother were a very sad thing.

And when we got to this town it was called [unclear 00:31:54] but I don’t know what it would be called now it may not have the same name. That’s where we boarded a train and on this train we went to Antwerp Belgium.

To pick up the boat that we were going on. And we-that night on the train was very sad. My younger brother cried for his grandmother on the train. I will never forget that. I still sad thinking about it.

**Janet**: This is the one who was a year and a half younger than you

**Esther**: He and I both very close.

**Janet**: Was the feeling that you will never see them again when the family left?

**Esther**: Probably but [crying]

**Janet**: Did you stay a long while in Antwerp?

**Esther**: Yes. When we got to-while first we had to go to pirogue. And the first time I saw a mannequin was in Prague in a big department window I had never seen that before. And I think later on somewhere along the line I had read about this department store in Prague. And then from Prague we got a train to go to Antwerp.

And yes we had to stay in Antwerp I think about three weeks before the boat came for us. And my uncle of course who was an American citizen and he spoke many languages because he had learned them as a boy-was able to help us-direct us to everything you know. He what to say and he knew what to do.

And I remember being on the water front in Antwerp and he took us to a coffee shop. And I have never smelled anything so delicious like the pastry in that coffee shop. That’s a memory from when I was a little girl. He bought us-I don’t know some little French pastries or whatever they had I can’t remember what it was anymore. I remember of this place was wonderful.

**Janet**: And then were you examined at all before you boarded the ship?

**Esther**: I don’t remember that. I don’t remember that at all. And we evidently must have been because I think we had to have vaccinations and stuff before we could get on the ship. So I think we-either that or my uncle had arranged all that before we left. I don’t remember that.

**Janet**: Do you remember-why don’t you say the name of the ship and anything you remember-?

**Esther**: The new Zeeland. I remember being very sick to my stomach when it started to sail. And I do remember that-I am trying to think. I don’t know if it was called steerage in those days I don’t really know. But I remember a lot of evening the families of a lot of people who were on this boat were in one great big room like an auditorium type thing.

And everybody was either playing guitars or violins or whatever music that they played. And people were dancing around and trying to be happy on the voyage because it took us. Oh we were on the ocean at least three weeks.

**Janet**: Where the dancing and singing was going on was that the same area that you were sleeping then? Or was that a different area?

**Esther**: I don’t remember that see? The sleeping had tube nearby because how far can you go you know.

**Janet**: Unless you were up on deck for the singing and everything [unclear 00:36:30]

**Esther**: I don’t whether it was down below or on deck but it was a big room. Where everybody seemed to be happy and looking forward to their new adventure in the United States.

**Janet**: Do you remember your mother anything about how she felt leaving her country and coming to this country or?

**Esther**: Well but see her husband was here and she was looking forward to that. I am sure she had feeling like I am having now.

**Janet**: So do you remember when the ship came into the New York harbor?

**Esther**: Vaguely remember. The ship came in and I think some kind of a small boat took us to Ellis Island. And I remember Ellis Island was a huge place. Never saw anything that big. With lots and lots of people.

And we all must have been vaccinated or something before we got on that boat because when you come in in Ellis Island each child had to be checked out. And my mother had to be checked out and my uncle who was American citizen had to be checked out. I have to tell you a cute story about my uncle who came to get us. He meets a cousin of my fathers who he fell in love with.

And after he brought us to the United States and we were settled in canton he lived in Cleveland-he went back to Czechoslovakia and married this cousin of my father who became my aunt. Lived in Cleveland for many years. Charming lady, very charming lady. As I grew up I remembered more and more about her. I dint remember her as much as a little girl because she was a young woman and I was six years old.

You don’t pay attention to those people that much. But she became my aunt and she is a very sweet charming lady and lived in Cleveland. They didn’t have any children. So when I would go to visit some of my relatives in Cleveland I always vested her too. And this uncle played the violin and he also had a good voice and he used to do. He was a canter in one of the synagogues in Cleveland.

**Janet**: Is there anything else about Ellis island-do you recall how long you were there?

**Esther**: I think we were there just overnight. And I think we were shipped out the next day.

**Janet**: Do you remember anything about the accommodations or food or how you were treated?

**Esther**: I think on Ellis Island I think my uncle bought us some ice-cream cones. That may have been the first time I ever tasted ice-cream. And it was like a treat for the children you know. But I don’t remember too much about it because it seemed like just-all I can remember is loads and loads of people.

They just seem like they were all over the place. But I don’t even know if we had spent an overnight there. I don’t remember that at all. But I remember coming to canton not too long after we got to Ellis Island so it may have been that we got there on evening and then the next day softer we were all processed gotten a train to come to canton.

**Janet**: Do you remember you went to pen stations apparently and the [unclear 00:40:52] do you remember anything about that part of the voyage? Going to the peen station and then the train ride?

**Esther**: I remember the train ride but I don’t remember the station at all. I guess it was too many things to observe when we came in. And little girls you know at that point you may be afraid you know you just hang on to your family. But I remember getting to the station here and getting off the train and meeting my father for the first time. I remember that

**Janet**: What was it like?

**Esther**: Well this was a strange man that I never knew you know. And of course after a while we just loved him he was very good and sweet and kind. but at first it’s a- I think when you are eight years old and you first see your father for the first time I can’t exactly remember my feelings. But my brother remembered my father.

My sister remembered my father because they were older. Because I was two when he left you know I couldn’t remember him at all. And I didn’t remember any of the uncles that had emigrated before till I lived here for a while and little by little from Cleveland and I had an aunt from Indianapolis. Little by little they all came to canton to see these greenies that came here.

**Janet**: Do you remember that? Do you remember being considered the green horns?

**Esther**: Yeah sure I remember that we used to joke about it then later years we thought it was a big joke. But I remember when they came to see us and this aunt would give you 50cents or a dollar to go buy candy or whatever. And then for yours when they came and you were a little girl they would give you a dollar when they came to visit you know.

And I remember aunts in [unclear 00:43:11] two aunts in [unclear 00:43:15] and two aunts in Cleveland and then some of those cousins were my age. And as a girl before I got old enough I used to go vacationing there. But by that time I could speak a little English and they could understand me.

And then as I got older and into my teens and my cousins used to fix me up on dates and stuff. Because they were girls. One girl was a year younger than I and another one was two years younger than I. And then when the older cousins were friends with my sister, my older brother you know.

And we had relatives in Pennsylvania. The sister to my father. And those girls they say-as we got older-those girls used to come and visit and my brother and sister would fix them up with local dates here. So I would say that mostly we were a close knit family. Because we used to keep in touch. To this day I keep in touch. I have a cousin in Israel; I just sent him a new year’s card.

And when my children went to Israel about 8/9 years ago I had his address and they look him up. He lived in Telaviv and I wrote him and told him where my children were going to be at what hotel. And my daughter in-law who has been married for my son now for about over 30years. 32 I think it’s going to be this year or 33.

My daughter law said when she saw this cousin come into the hotel he resembled one of my uncles so much that she could have picked him that he was the relative. Because this people were first cousins whom I had never seen. They lived in different part of Hungary than I did. And through the war you did see anybody.

**Janet**: Did the family ever consider themselves Hungarian or Czechoslovakian or?

**Esther**: Well they always said Hungarian because you see when my father came here he was a Hungarian. It was when I came here that it became Czechoslovakia at that point. But the grownups came for Austria Hungary it was called at that time.

**Janet**: Do you remember any other experiences when you first arrived coming here to canton. Did you start school right away?

**Esther**: Yes and not too long afterwards yes we had to start school. And I had you know some aunts and uncles in canton and one of them had three little children. This aunt was like 12 years older than I. You know as I got grown up.

I thought she was an old lady when I came here. She had two little kids already. You know she was an old lady. And I used to look at her when I was in my teens you know this aunt was old. But when I got married she wasn’t old anymore. It’s funny how your attitudes change.

**Janet**: Can you think of any attitudes or values things that your mother and your father told you that were things that had to do with how you would stay and how should live?

**Esther**: Oh yes. I remember when my brother my oldest brother-when he would go out my father would tell him to be home by 12 o’clock. You know when he was old enough to out on date.

And I remember that my dad used to sit on back and wait for my brother to come. And if he was late my brother would take his shoes off so the steps wouldn’t creek on the way upstairs and my father was standing in the hall and saying 'where were you all this time'. And when my sister was dating.-when I was 12 she was 17 I wanted dating but she was.

I remember that my father would say 'good girls don’t stay out late at night you know' and she would say to him 'pa if I wanted to be and I could be bad in the morning I didn’t have to wait till at night'. That was one of the expressions she always used to tell my dad. And yes they taught us values sure they did.

**Janet**: And how about the religious life of the family did it continue here-

**Esther**: Oh yes we always belonged to a synagogue. And all my brother were-my younger brother who I remember his Bamistva. and I think Leo was the first one-he must have been-when I was eight he was 12 and I think we were here short while and he was bamistva. But in those days your father took the family to the synagogue.

And the day they read from the Torah was the day you were Bamistva. There was no big deal. So my brother Leo was a bamistva. My brother albert I remember on a Thursday morning but my baby brother for him we were more advanced by that and we did what the custom was.

They had the bamistva and it was on a Sabbath. And we I think served some kind of a little lunch at the synagogue which at that point got to what you should be doing.

**Janet**: In the old country your oldest brother was bamistva?

**Esther**: Oh yes

**Janet**: And that the same kind of thing the day he read the Torah?

**Esther**: The day he read Torah-when they took him up to read the Torah I think in the most-at that point there was no conservative synagogue it was orthodox. The day he read the Torah is the day he became the bamsitva boy.

And you were 13 years old then. And you became what they call [00:50:13] but he was still a young boy. But by the time we came to the United States he was 15 years old.

**Janet**: And how about the girl? Was there such a thing as the Bazmistva or the-

**Esther**: Oh no. Bazmistva is within the last 25-30 years. Nobody-

**Janet**: So girls really didn’t have a ceremony?-

**Esther**: No, no. that was unheard of. That was started in the United States. I remember the first basmistva I went to I was already married and I would be married 61 years if my husband was living because I got married in 1935.

The first basmistva I went to I am trying to think how old I was. I got married when I was 23-I had to be in my 30s the first basmistva that I went t for a girl. So it could have been sometimes I n the late 40s.

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

**Esther**: Oh well he was a canton boy. And I used to get the wish city a lot as a little girl in my teens. I belonged to something’s there. And I meet his sister first. I knew his sister for a number of years. And one of his sisters.

And that’s how I meet him but actually he was a friend of a boy that belonged to a club of young boys you know. And I just knew him for about 5-6 years before we got married. I meet him through that young kid around town you know.

**Janet**: Were there a lot of people who had immigrated in your community besides [unclear 00:52:30]-

**Esther**: There were some but nobody came from Czechoslovakia at that time. Some of them came from Poland some came from Russia. But my husband was born in Cleveland. And his family ended up living in canton when he was 11 years old.

And his sister who is a little older than I -we belonged to a club together and I got to know she and I met some of her family and Sam was one of them. But we didn’t even look at each other at first. And then when I started to date more he was a very handsome fella very good looking man.

And he read-by the time I married him he had great tempos, and his hair was just beautiful and curly and grey. But as I said as a youngster we used to date from [unclear 00:53:35] and Cleveland and [unclear 00:53:37]. And then this boy’s formation used to date the girls from those towns.

And when met Sam he was going with somebody you know a girlfriend. But hen little by little I guess we started dating more and more and then one of the fellas in his club was dating one of his sisters and then another fella was dating a girl friend of mine. And you know as you go along you start-this is your boyfriend. And you start going with him more and more.

**Janet**: And how many children did you have?

**Esther**: I had - I have two living children. I had miscarriage of twins. Then I lost a little girl when she was 22 and so old. But my-I had the miscarriage of twin’s right after I was married. And twins ran in my husband’s family too and in my family.

I had twin aunt uncles. And he had a twin brother and sister that were younger than he. So I would have had a set of them all about. They would have been born 9-10 months after I was married so it would have been about 60. And mow my oldest children is 55 and a grandfather.

**Janet**: What are your children’s names?

**Esther**: William and Sharon. Sharon was a name- William was names after an uncle whose name was William my mother brother and Sharon was named after an aunt.

**Janet**: And when you think back about-upon the fact that you came here as an eight year old and lived the rest of your life here. How do you think about that or any effects of that or the fact that the family immigrated to this country do you?

**Esther**: Well I think as I got older we were very grateful to be here with all the trouble that was in Europe you know. Because we lost an awful lot of people in our family. During the Hitler period awful lot.

And i remember an incident of one cousin who used to write to my father after the war and she wrote him and told him that the gentile people in that town hid her and her and her brother in the [unclear 00:56:31]. So you know there were people that you knew all your life when you lived there and they were the kind that liked you as a neighbor. And they didn’t want you to get killed.

So they helped you out. Those were stories that came from our cousins in Europe as they emerged form all this terrible period. And lots of then ran way to other places.

**Janet**: Was there any ever an effort before it was too late to bring the family member?

**Esther**: Yes we had an uncle. My father's sister's husband. Who came here short of -before the war broke out in Europe. Before world war two broke out. He was here for about a year and he had brother in New York and he had us in canton. And he left his wife and children in Europe.

And he was so lonesome he had to go back. He just could not stand it here. Our family begged him to send for his family and bring them here and he said no he could never live here. It was so different. He went back and sure enough that whole family was whipped out. We always think about that. But some of our relatives managed to escape and as I said they got to different parts of the world. I had some cousins in Budapest who came back from the work camps.

They were beautiful young women who sent us pictures. Because my father used to correspond with his sisters in Budapest. And these girls used to send pictures. And then they were forced to go to a labor camp but thank God they survived. And I guess a layout camp was as bad from Hungary as it was from some other places. I guess Poland and some places were terrible.

Some of these young women when they came home from the labor camps they would not stay in Hungary and live under communist domination. Some of them married and they went off to Australia. Had a couple of cousins in Australia. Now this people are in the United States their children I hear.

And I have a cousin living in Pittsburg that I never knew in Europe. He is about my age-didn’t know him as a boy/child. And he came to Pittsburg after the Hungarian revolution. When they were trying to overthrow the communist in Hungary. He came here then.

**Janet**: Okay it’s just about an hour is there anything else you would like to say before we close?

**Esther**: Well I don’t know what else you want to know. I have enjoyed my life in the United States. And for every day that I have had here I have always been very grateful that I didn’t have to go throw what my family did in Europe really. And I don’t think that people realize what those people really went through.

Nobody unless you are living in those small villages. There were some terrible people in those small villages too that were very anti-Semitic. But on the whole it sort of-how can I say this-it gained momentum. when one family start disliking another family then his relative and his cousin dislike him and that gains momentum in a small village particularly. Because look what they did in the big cities in Germany.

How the neighbors allowed this to happen you know it’s unbelievable. That people would allow this to happen to people who were their close associates. And a school, a university as a neigh bout that they would allow this to happen.

I am forever grateful that I came to the United States when I did. Because I have had a wonderful life here. You know even with pitfalls and things and with deaths in my family, I had a very kind hearted husband and you know we just together pulled through whatever things happened to us we just somehow pulled through it all.

**Janet**: Okay we are going to have to close here I want to thank you so much.

**Esther**: Oh your welcome I am glad you came for the interview.

**Janet**: Me too. I have been speaking with Esther Klausner who came from what was Czechoslovakia at the time in 1920 when she was eight years old. This is Janet Levine for the national park service. It’s September 15th 1996 and I am signing off.