**Edward:** This is Edward Applebaum. I’m speaking with Miss. Deborah Sachs, on Friday September 13th 1985. We are beginning this interview at 3.05 in the afternoon.

We are about to interview miss Sachs about her immigration experience from Holland in 1920. Also present in the room is Miss Sachs brother Samuel Gross who immigrated with her at the same time. Miss Sachs, where and when were you born?

**Deborah:**  I was born in Antwerp in 1907 and what I remember is very little about that part of my life. But I do remember that we lived in a very lovely house, and that my mother had to carry pales of water for each bath that she was giving the children and that sounds pretty primitive.

But also seemed primitive to me was that she said she had to make all the baby clothes. They didn't sell any baby clothes in those days. Everybody made them.

**Edward:** What did your family do in Belgium?

**Deborah:**  My father learned the diamond cleaving business. He was actually a student originally just studying the [unclear 00:01:21] so on and he came from Austria as my mother did also and then transferred to Germany when he was 2 years old.

This was an arranged marriage and my grandfather, my mother's father decided he better learn a trade and they decided to make it diamond cleaving, which is not the same as diamond cutting. It’s a much more difficult, it requires much more skill.

As a matter of fact it was paid better than almost any salary that I know of in those days, because what they did is they gave him a huge rock and he had to delineate with a pen and ink how to save the diamond from being cut up into too many little pieces to get as much value out of it as possible.

**Edward:** How would they come to move to Belgium?

**Deborah:**  That I never found out really. Do you know? It was just that it was a diamond industry and I think they just planned to make it. My grandfather was a diamond merchant. He wasn't that originally. Originally he was simply a farmer with horses and cows and what not in [unclear 00:02:39], Krakow but I guess it's really the diamond industry that made him make that switch.

**Samuel:** I think the Economic conditions in Poland was rather low and both grandparents moved from there. One set of grandparents went to Germany. The other went to Antwerp, Belgium.

**Edward:** And then you moved from Belgium.

**Deborah:**  When the World War 1 broke out I heard it on the streets even though as children in those days, they were never told about current events. That was not their business and newspapers were not available to the children, you might say. However I heard on the street and I remember it very distinctly women sticking their heads out of the window, and saying, “Did you hear? There’s a war going to be here, there's going to be a war,” and it looks bad and all I gathered was that everybody was scared stiff.

Very very scared and when the day finally came when we left Belgium, I do remember the scene at the railroad station. It was screaming, crying, such bewilderment. People’s kids getting lost. It was just an unbelievable scene, just unbelievable. It’s something that the movies would probably be able to show better than my words would.

**Samuel:** Turns out that my father was an Austrian citizen and if he didn't leave Belgium he would be deported and in order not to be deported he went to Holland in order to be in a neutral country.

**Deborah:**  However I don't know how long we were in. We went to Amsterdam and I don't know how long it was. When I recall we were all lining up to say goodbye to my father who left for this country, for America. The idea being that he'd try to make a living here and then bring us to this country, the land of golden opportunity.

**Edward:** This is after you had moved to Amsterdam?

**Deborah:**  Yeah, after we moved.

**Edward:** Your father had left ahead of you?

**Deborah:**  He left ahead for five and a half years he was gone which was a big adjustment later, very big adjustment.

**Samuel:** I’d like to add to the scene there, at the railroad station, for me it was very romantic. It’s the first time that I saw the night sky and the stars and I really reveled in the beauty of it. First time that I saw at night.

**Deborah:**  I guess the sight prevailed over the sound in that case. Well my mother had a little one six month’s old baby and there were then 4 of us besides, so my grandparents went with us to Amsterdam. The excitement of children getting lost is what really sticks in my mind, the fear and the terrible sadness and nobody knowing what's ahead.

**Samuel:** For me it was really a period of excitement.

**Deborah:** Adventure?

**Samuel:** Adventure exactly.

**Deborah:**  It's a female versus male.

**Samuel:** No, nothing about the fear of it, I didn't really understand the whole idea of war and the necessity of moving but for me it was an exciting period.

**Edward:** What was life like for your family then after your father had gotten to the United States and you were still in Holland.

**Deborah:**  Well my maternal grandparents took care of us and stayed with my mother to help take care of the children. So on the whole I don't think we suffered much hardship.

**Samuel:** The only thing I remember that was a bit unpleasant is that the living quarters were rather small and compared to what we had lived in before. And that was sort of a setback for me.

**Edward:** What was your family doing for an income at that point?

**Samuel:** We depended on what my father would send from America.

**Deborah:**  No, and then my grandfather sustained us too, in fact very much so.

**Edward:** What were you hearing from him in America?

**Samuel:** He wrote us regular letters and I didn’t know the contents of the letters but the letters I assumed came regularly.

**Deborah:**  Yeah. I remember my mother almost every Thursday night was her time to write and that she always wrote, to me. I must tell you about school because when I came to this country the first thing I said was gee you can't have any fun in this place.

I had a lot of fun in Holland and it was much freer. The discipline was expected so that you don't have a feeling that you were disruptive of anything. Nobody was disruptive and you got hit on the knuckle if you were the least bit different but on the whole I felt much free and coming to this country when I didn't know the language of course made a tremendous difference.

**Edward:** What language were you speaking in Holland?

**Deborah:**  Dutch. In fact Flemish is mostly Dutch with a little French but mostly Dutch.

**Edward:** Why did the rest of the family wait?

**Deborah:**  It was strictly a case of financial necessity he had to wait until he had earned enough to provide for us. That was the arrangement originally. He took that long. Now he came fortunately we had a cousin on his side that asked him to stay with the family so that he had no hardship as far as finding a place to stay and they were wonderful. That was in Brooklyn.

**Edward:** So what was your idea about the United States while he was over here and you weren't?

**Deborah:**  Well, I tell you in school, especially my last day, I’ll never forget because everybody was very envious, the teachers as well as the students. Of course they really thought that there was gold to be had. Just for the asking almost. It was unbelievable that the picture we had of the United States was far far more beautiful than I actually saw when I came.

I was very disillusioned. At least my first day I will never forget the little framed houses. You don't see framed houses in Holland. And they still have brick firm looking houses, solid looking and here there are little shacks to me at least in my eyes.

In school everybody was serious. I had a lot of fun in Holland and I was a regular trouble maker and I enjoyed it and then suddenly you can't speak the language. You can't talk and you can't say anything, you can't draw people around you, you've become almost like a wall flower. So I had to make a very big adjustment. My whole personality changed. I think it came back eventually but many many years I was really different.

**Samuel:** I recall in preparation for coming I must have read up a little bit. What sticks in my mind is central park. I read about central park and how beautiful it was and how huge it was and I just anticipated someday I will be visiting central park New York City.

**Deborah:**  You know that reminds me because we lived near a bus and I said, “Boy I can't wait till I get on one of those buses, travelling.” I thought that is so wonderful. Well of course after a while I took to the buses on a daily basis but when I first came I thought of thrill, I’m going to be able to get places.

**Edward:** So when your family was finally preparing to come over to the United States, what took place? What did you pack?

**Samuel:** Well there was very little to pack because everything was left behind.

**Deborah:**  No, we had suitcases galore.

**Samuel:** Suitcases yes but…

**Deborah:**  And trunks and things like that. I recall we had to go to Rotterdam for the boat and I recall my grandmother, the one that had stayed with us on the bus she started to cry and I was so embarrassed. Who cries, what adult cries on the bus and yet it's very understandable of course because they didn't come with us. They stayed behind.

**Edward:** When you came over it was you and your mother?

**Samuel:** And the siblings.

**Deborah:**  And all the siblings yeah.

**Edward:** Who was there besides you two?

**Deborah:**  There was an older sister and a younger sister and a younger brother and then in this country a boy was born, so that makes 6.

**Edward:** You left from the port of Rotterdam in 1920?

**Deborah:**  Yes.

**Edward:** Do you remember what ship you sailed on?

**Deborah:**  Yes it was called the Neo Amsterdam which is like New Amsterdam. It was nice boat and we went second class or third, whatever they call it and one of the things that I can't every get out of my mind is that there was a steerage section where they gave the people cans of sardines, right in the cans. They had to eat out the cans. I couldn't believe they treated them like animals and I was very grateful we didn't have to go that way.

**Edward:** What was it like in your section?

**Deborah:**  Very normal. Like a tourist class. No problem at all.

**Edward:** You had meals on tables?

**Deborah:**  Oh yeah but I had a steward who gave me a lot of trouble and I was very innocent so really gave me a lot of trouble. But the accommodations were very good.

**Edward:** Did you meet any people on the boat?

**Deborah:**  No only on in a hotel. You say hallo, you see them but not for a lasting friendship or anything like that.

**Samuel:** None that we knew.

**Edward:** Did the children play together.

**Samuel:** I’m sure they did.

**Deborah:**  But we had freedom to run the decks, so the trip itself was not confining.

**Edward:** How was it that you were able to see the people who were travelling at steerage?

**Deborah:**  From one deck you could see it. They were huddled very much the way when you see holocaust pictures. I hate to say it but they were so close together nobody could room and I thought boy your sleeping quarters must be something awful. I even saw them sleep on the ground, on the deck there, terrible.

**Edward:** What were some of the nationalities? Do you know?

**Deborah:**  No I don't. From Rotterdam of them I imagine it would be mostly western.

**Edward:** You think they were western?

**Samuel:** I imagine it must have been a lot of eastern too.

**Deborah:**  Rotterdam, why would they go all the way to Rotterdam?

**Samuel:** In order to catch the boat?

**Deborah:**  But they were other boats.

**Samuel:** Sure?

**Deborah:**  Yeah.

**Samuel:** I would say that the steerage class really was a scene of poverty.

**Deborah:**  Extreme poverty really. But even as a child I thought it was very degrading to see people treated like that.

**Edward:** How do you think your mother enjoyed the trip over?

**Deborah:**  I sensed that she felt a tremendous sense of responsibility because suddenly her parents weren't there anymore and here she had this brood. The oldest was 13, I was 12 and I think she did alright as far as we had a lot of freedom. She didn't have us in or anything.

The trip was fine. I remember my father came over. He was sick all the way through he was in bed for 10 days that was the length of the trip. He just threw up all the time and he was as sick as a dog.

**Edward:** Had he gone over steerage?

**Deborah:**  No.

**Samuel:** It was wintertime and the seas were rocky.

**Deborah:**  Yeah it was December but he was really sick and I wasn't sick one day.

**Edward:** Did you know before you came over any other people who had immigrated to the United States?

**Deborah:**  No, we were looked as very very lucky people. And I guess immigration wasn't that heavy in those days, 1920?

**Edward:** So the boat got over to the United States?

**Deborah:**  There was a lot of talking just a day or two before the landing about this Glaucoma problem and they were scared stiff they might be rejected or the family might be separated and it was a very uptight feeling on the boat. Did you get that too?

**Samuel:** Yeah, a lot of anxiety.

**Deborah:**  Tremendous.

**Samuel:** There was the one scene that I do remember quite different from what we’re talking about and that was the sunset and I was at the rail of the boat and here the sun was a glowing red circle slowly sinking into the ocean and to this day it appeared to me as though the sun was actually disappearing into the ocean. Only later did I find out that it couldn't be.

**Edward:** So when you got at New York harbor did you see the Statue of Liberty?

**Deborah:**  Oh yes. There’s a big commotion when that comes to the view. Excitement and you feel you're finally there. It’s hard to believe for a while that you're really going to be in this country. But when you see the Statue of Liberty you know it's there and you're going to be there and it's thrilling. As I said I was very thrilled and excited it was just when I finally did come that I got this feeling of disappointment but before that I was very excited.

**Edward:** What did the people in steerage do when you got into the harbor?

**Deborah:**  When we came to Ellis Island everybody was categorized you might say. The steerage people I’m sure were not taken care of first. We were probably taken care of first, so we didn't see, did you see them?

**Samuel:** I think the steerage class was last to leave the boat.

**Deborah:**  And they were treated as if they were, you might say not equal to the rest of us. But we saw people that were rejected. It’s a terrible thing to see really and long lines and a lot of waiting and again a lot of crying and a lot tension in Ellis Island itself.

**Edward:** Why were people being rejected?

**Deborah:**  I imagine mostly eye trouble because that's what they were talking about in advance. Our eyes better be good or else.

**Edward:** Who were you hearing that from?

**Deborah:**  From the people, they were talking. I guess they knew that there was such a thing. My husband has a cousin who was separated from her sister because of it, was turned back. So you usually do know of people that have not been allowed to get in.

**Samuel:** And the rumor even existed when we were in Rotterdam that there's a possibility that if you didn't pass the eye examination you would be either rejected or sent back.

**Edward:** So what was the eye examination like?

**Samuel:** Just the visual examination.

**Deborah:**  I don’t think anything very detailed. I think they probably had some little mechanism to look at your eye but nothing, no eye chart or anything like that, do you?

**Samuel:** No, they were looking for disease.

**Deborah:**  They were looking really for glaucoma and other diseases that were apparent. They were apparent ones here.

**Edward:** What were any other tests that you were given on Ellis Island or questions you were asked?

**Deborah:**  As kids we wouldn't know this.

**Samuel:** No I don't think so. The examination was rather short.

**Deborah:** But they do ask questions. I myself don't remember, they do ask questions.

**Edward:** Your mother was taking care of it?

**Deborah:**  Yeah, she took care of the whole thing.

**Edward:** Who was in charge of the bags?

**Deborah:**  Of what?

**Edward:** Who was carrying all of your bags for you?

**Samuel:** I haven't the slightest notion, to me is as though they didn't exist.

**Deborah:**  Yeah, but everybody had them, so whatever it is.

**Edward:** Do you have an impression of seeing all the people on Ellis Island, the people from different countries?

**Samuel:** Well, I couldn't exactly identify them from different countries but it was a huge crowd and in the building itself it was a vast piece of humanity there.

**Edward:**  What did the building look like inside?

**Deborah:**  Well, I saw it recently and just the way I pictured it. A long long hall and long benches and the benches were used because everybody got in line. Tremendously long lines and you just waited your turn.

Again, it was a tremendous amount of anxiety there and a lot of tension and a tremendous relief when you were accepted and then of course when you get off into the country itself, into the United States and you start looking for the person that's supposed to pick you up and again there was a lot of excitement. You look and look.

**Edward:** How long would you say you were on Ellis Island for?

**Deborah:**  Not long.

**Samuel:** No, the duration was very short. I think a matter of several hours.

**Deborah:**  Hours, I would say hours. But it seemed like a lot of people. A lot of people

**Samuel:** I think the main fear was that you were to be separated from your family because the crowd was very immense.

**Edward:** Did your mother ever talk about it afterwards?

**Deborah:**  No, she was a rather passive turned person and sort of kept her thoughts to herself pretty well. But she took her job very seriously and I said, when you come from Europe you don't act as wild as you do over here. You’re respectful and if you're told you stay here, you stay here.

**Edward:** So how did you finally make contact with your father?

**Deborah:**  He came to pick us up and as I told you over the phone, there was such a beautiful love scene between my mother and my father then that I was embarrassed as a child to see it. It was just like a Laura all over again. And they sat on a bench. There must have been a bench somewhere because they sat on a bench completely oblivious to humanity around them

**Edward:** Okay. If there's any else you wanted to tell me about the time that you were on Ellis Island itself. What you children did as the parents were....?

**Deborah:**  We were scared the general feeling.

**Edward:** Were you excited?

**Deborah:**  Yeah because we stuck together. We were told to and we did. The feeling in Ellis island of fear mainly fear, everybody was scared will we get through and the...

**Edward:** Had the children been separated while you were on Ellis Island?

**Deborah:**  No, we stuck together. It’s only on the boat where we're free to do what we want.

**Edward:** Do you know how much money you were travelling with?

**Samuel:** No, I didn't.

**Deborah:**  I don't know. I got the feeling I may be wrong but it was $112.50 a person, does that sound right?

**Edward:** The fare to get over?

**Deborah:**  I don't know I may be wrong.

**Edward:** Did you get dressed up for the day of coming onto the island itself?

**Deborah:**  You had very limited clothing when you go there. So that I don't remember but we were dressed up, that I’m sure, my mother made sure of that. And then we had a taxi and we drove to the house. My father had bought a home, a small home.

**Edward:** The taxi did you get it from..?

**Samuel:** Hoboken.

**Deborah:**  And I recall the street was pretty well tree lined and I thought that isn't too bad, amidst my disappointments but I adjusted pretty fairly and my father told us, “No Dutch spoken in this house, only English. I don't care if you only said yes or no but it must be English,” and in order to help us attain that as fast as possible he had a tutor come to the house but if the tutor doesn't speak Dutch, it's just a pure waste and he realized it. And the only way you really learn the language is to be among English speaking people in school and that's how we learned.

**Edward:** And what was school like?

**Deborah:**  Well, the first time I went to the class, I will never forget it, I saw a colored girl and I don't want to sound racist but we didn't have any colored children there, so naturally my eyes focused on her first. She was chewing gum and I remember the pink gum was visible.

Her mouth was open wide while she was chewing and I thought I’d throw up and I thought it was the most disgusting sight, that was my first experience as I entered the class room and I don't know to this day whether the lesson was a history lesson, a science lesson, not of math where there was in figures but I really had no idea but the teachers were very very nice to me.

Very pleasant and the principal of that school put me in a very low grade because I didn't know any English and that burnt me up because my sister is one year older and she was put in the top grade only because she did have English. Of course it's stupid when you think of it.

**Edward:** How did she manage to learn English?

**Deborah:**  She went to a school where they taught English, in Holland yes. What I realized was later, how stupid that principal was because I would learn my English whether I was put in the 7th grade or in the 6th grade and I felt very uncomfortable being with older people, very uncomfortable. So my experience of school to begin with was not the best.

But I will say the teachers were all nice, very understanding and I remember when one teacher thought I was ready to read English. She asked me to read a paragraph in the history book and I saw the word Ohio. Well, we don't have an I in the Dutch language so I said, “Oho”. Well they burst out laughing, they thought I was really funny and I off course read as a bit but the teacher hollered the whole class and yet it was very natural that they should laugh. It sounds funny.

**Edward:** Did you miss Holland?

**Deborah:**  Well, for a long time I had a tremendous affection for Holland and I still have I think a warm spot but when I visited Holland and I saw all these beatniks and what not all over the steps there by the palace, well it was such a terrible sight. These slovenly kids, beards, dirty beards, dirty jeans, I felt sick.

That was not my Holland. I had such a romantic feeling towards Holland and we went back to look at the house we lived in and that is now a brewery, the Amstel brewery but they left enough houses that were identical so that I know what kind of a house I lived in.

**Edward:** What about your parents. Do you think they had regrets?

**Samuel:** Well, I believe yes and no. Life in America was certainly better but there was a certain time particularly from my father he had very close ties to his father and he must have missed him. By and large we did get accustomed to the United States and I’m sure none of us would want to change places.

**Deborah:**  We were lucky.

**Samuel:** Talking going to school, we came here on the 22nd of June I believe it was and…

**Deborah:**  1920 yeah.

**Samuel:** And we were ushered to school on the 29th which for me was a horror because I couldn't speak the language. But luckily it was the last day of school and I was very much relieved, so that during the special period of two months I had a chance to pick up on the English language.

**Edward:** How many settled in Hoboken.

**Samuel:** The terminal of the Holland America land was in Hoboken. That’s where the ship.... where we due to tackle ... to Newark where our home was to be.

**Edward:** Right. Then how had he settled in Newark?

**Samuel:** My father had purchased a house in Newark and I understand at the time it was rather difficult to acquire a house without having to expend an enormous sum and this probably explains why he waited as long as he did to get us over from Holland.

**Edward:** Was he working? This is the end of side one tape one. This is tape one side 2. Was your father continuing in the diamond industry in the United States?

**Deborah:**  Yes, In fact in the area of cleaving and when we came over it was in its heyday. A year later the factory closed, he was given a special offer where he did his cleaving but a year later the factory closed and that is such a cyclical livelihood and he had so many of us to be fed. It was very hard for him after that.

**Edward:** The factory was in Newark?

**Deborah:**  In Newark on Summit Street.

**Edward:** And where was your home?

**Deborah:**  On North Ford Avenue.

**Edward:** By what would he go to work?

**Samuel:** By bus.

**Deborah:**  Yeah. We lived near the bus, remember I mentioned that.

**Samuel:** I recall greeting him at the bus when he came home which was around 5:30 in the evening. Most of the time, I came with an umbrella because of the storm, so I assume that 5 o'clock there would always be a storm with lightning and very often there would be a rainbow afterwards. I assumed that this was a natural pattern of things. It took a little while I found out it wasn't so.

**Edward:** So did you like Newark?

**Deborah:**  Well, in those days that we lived in. In fact I thought it was a busy place, active place and there were movies. Radford place was a regular hangout, the only thing is we had quite a walk to our school because we were at the very edge of that district and that's why it was a long walk. I think 10 blocks or more.

**Edward:** What was different from what you had expected, you told me that you thought you were going to see large buildings and they were...?

**Deborah:**  I thought I’d see only high-rises and in fact I dreamt that I was going to live on the 15th floor for some reason and I thought, how wonderful. I’m going to see the whole world from there. It was such a beautiful fantasy and I was really excited. Then I came to this, it wasn't even a wooden frame house that we lived in, we lived in a brick house but as we drove and I saw these little bits of houses as compared to my fantasy of high-rises, you can imagine that my thought just dropped. But I got to like the United States after a while and I’m very grateful that I’m not in Holland anymore.

**Edward:** Were there any other families in your neighborhood that were from Harlem?

**Deborah:**  No.

**Edward:** Were you able to make friends with children?

**Deborah:**  Well they were all to me at least, they were all very nice. They tried to teach me as I walked home with them. I remember one girl said, “What grade are you in?” and I corrected her, I said “You mean, what class am I in?” I’ll never forget it the nerve of me to say that, to correct a girl who knew her English but little by little it's amazing how each day, you learn a little more, you grasp a little bit more and the grade I was in.

I remember they talked about the Oliver’s Confederation day after day and it was coming out of my ears because I didn't know what they were talking about except the title, Oliver confederation. finally the teacher turned to me and asked me something about the olive confederation and I just shrugged my shoulder and I said in my own halting English, “I know what you're saying but I don't know.” Meaning I didn't know the answers.

**Edward:** Were there other children too who didn't speak English also?

**Deborah:**  No, I was the only one. Also from Holland you don't get many immigrants, at least not in those days.

**Samuel:** I was disappointed in Newark much more than Debbie. Particularly the architecture you found, the helter skelter of houses whereas in Europe we were accustomed to the houses lined up regularly. Of course I’ve learned to appreciate differences today but another feature that was lacking in Newark, there were no flowers around.

In Amsterdam almost every vacant spot had flowers and I enjoyed that and the fact that we didn't have that in Newark and a great extent. I missed that feature very very much.

**Deborah:**  Also Amsterdam was a much more varied type of city. We have our canals. It’s much more exciting. Windmills, it's a much more beautiful city, much more varied. As far as that was concerned Newark was a bust but New York to this day, I love New York.

**Edward:** Do you remember the first time you saw Manhattan? That was skyscrapers?

**Deborah:**  Yeah, well the first time I don't know, but I finally did see it and I finally came to the realization that the world isn't all skyscrapers. But that first day was really a shock.

**Edward:** How did you think your mother felt?

**Deborah:**  As I said she was a person who didn't talk much, we never asked. Did we?

**Samuel:** No.

**Deborah:**  My father was much more enthusiastic type of person.

**Samuel:** I’m sure she eventually got accustomed to the change. I’m sure she appreciated the United States but having to take care of a large family was difficult for her?

**Deborah:**  I think for her not having her parents when they were with her for 5 and a half years must have been extremely difficult.

**Edward:** Did they ever come over?

**Deborah:**  My grandfather did and died here. As a matter of fact my grandmother had died and it was apparently a very long illness and my grandfather was the one who took care of her because she didn't want any outsiders. He was so exhausted that when she died he came right over to visit his daughter. She’s an only child, was an only child and of course the grandchildren and then he decided that he would like to stay here but he didn't plan it that way.

He had so much trouble getting his visa extended at least for 6 months that the temperature, his excitement, his blood pressure, everything went way up and the poor fellow had a stroke and died. On the day that he died, the extension was granted, on the very day. Did you know?

**Edward:** What year was this?

**Samuel:** I would guess 1926. I may be wrong.

**Deborah:**  '26? No, I graduated high school then.

**Samuel:** 1936. That’s definite. 1936be cause my father died a year later.

**Deborah:**  That could be.

**Edward:** Once you became more acclimated to the country, what was it like?

**Deborah:**  I liked it better and better.

**Edward:** What were the things you liked?

**Deborah:**  Of course as you get older and transportation was fairly easy you get around and you go to museums, you go to libraries. There is much more freedom.

**Edward:** In what were you travelling to New York City?

**Deborah:**  Yeah. In fact I went to school for 4 years. I went to NYU, so I did plenty of travelling.

**Edward:** You would commute from Newark?

**Deborah:**  Mmh, to this day, I love New York, I’m happy that we're close to New York.

**Edward:** What did you do after you completed college?

**Deborah:**  I taught. I taught first home bound children because in those days they didn't have bus transportation for the handicapped. I taught the high school pupils and then when I got married and I had children of my own there was hiatus and then there was an opening in the arts school in the office and I became office manager.

What it did for me was it opened my eyes to the art world and that was the most wonderful experience for me, something I had never had opportunity to really enjoy. In this particular school, they are not professional teachers. They are artists, so that you get an entirely different taste about art.

**Edward:** When you said that, you were talking about the job problems that your father had because of economic cycles...?

**Deborah:**  Yes he sold picture prints for a while and then because he was fluent in both German and French he undertook lenses. He imported lenses for optometrists and ophthalmologists and so forth and so on. Opticians and he wrote to various firms in France and in Germany. In fact my mother continued with that after my father died but it was a hard life because 6 children and 2 adults, it was hard.

**Edward:** Did he tell you it was hard or you just...?

**Deborah:** No, I don't think he ever complained. It’s unbelievable. He travelled to New York everyday by bus for the longest time but he never complained. But he had an outlet because after supper he would go in the basement where there was a little corner with a desk and he'd study he's Torah or whatever it is. He was completely in a world of his own then. That gave me such pleasure that you might say the daily harassment was not in the picture anymore.

**Samuel:** It's one feature about my father that I stamped in my mind. That was all the difficulties I never heard him complain and he had many, many difficulties. To think that he picked up from one type of work to another at his age really is amazing.

**Deborah:**  But you know the irony of it all? When he died the factory reopened. Isn’t that the irony of life?

**Edward:** What kind of work did you do, Mr. Grossman when you finished school?

**Samuel:** When I finished school...

**Edward:** First you can tell me what was school like for you?

**Samuel:** At first it was difficult. As I explained the first day was a horror for me. The kids made fun of me because most of the kids wore knickers if not all of the youngsters and I wore pants a la the European style. So they knew that I was not American.

**Edward:** The pants European style was long legged?

**Samuel:** No shorts.

**Deborah:**  Seemed more like shorts

**Samuel:** After a while however I was a good student and I got along very very nicely and I went to New York where I attended city college for a while then I entered dental school in Philadelphia and I’ve been a dentist for 53 years.

**Deborah:**  Still is, Sam did have a 2 year trip to Germany. He left my paternal grandparents felt my mother had too much of a burden so in order to make it life a little bit easier both financially and otherwise, they asked her to send one of the children and they would take care of that child for the two years at least.

Sam was chosen and imagine just the 2 year hiatus and yet when he came back it seemed as though he was a stranger. We did not feel comfortable with him at all for quite a while. He was very shy. He thought he was among strangers also.

**Samuel:** But I enjoyed those 2 years in Germany and if it happened during the war and there's some unpleasant experiences seeing men with legs missing, arms missing having to go to shelters because of the bombers overhead but from a family point of view I was very well received, it was a warm feeling.

**Deborah:**  He was pampered.

**Samuel:** You can say that again.

**Edward:** When did you finally get to see central park?

**Samuel:** Oh I imagine probably the following year

**Edward:** Which would be, what year are we talking about?

**Samuel:** We're talking 1921 and indeed it was a huge park. Much larger than any park I’ve ever seen and I was very glad that I finally got to see it.

**Edward:** Were there parts of Holland that you missed?

**Samuel:** Yes, I loved to explore and there was certain sections in Amsterdam that were very elegant. I’d follow the various street cars to their destination so that I knew just about all the various avenues and streets.

**Deborah:**  That while by the way was a favorite occupation of children who had nothing to do on Saturdays and Sundays to follow the route of a car and I still remember one car that had, they had pictures not bigger with colors and a diagonal red and blue. You knew if you took that car where you would go.

**Samuel:** That was number 15 I believe.

**Deborah:**  Yes it was.

**Edward:** You said that the boys made fun of you for wearing knickers when you discard your European clothes?

**Samuel:** Oh yes. I prevail on my mother to take me to the store and buy me regular knickers. The others were not knickers. Everybody else was wearing knickers.

**Deborah:**  Oh I should mention one thing by the way, in Belgium, in Antwerp, they allowed children to enter school at the age of 3 and it's a full day and that's a tremendous boom for mothers with a lot children. But you see that's right now first coming into play in this country. To bring young children to the school and it was a regular school.

It’s a wonderful thing and it was a full day. Now we had to go in Holland which thank God I didn't miss for a minute. The Zionist had to go to Hebrew school after school and that prevented my playing on the street. Everybody was playing on the street, played ball. I never had time to play on the street with other children and we had a long walk. It was a long walk to the Hebrew school. I went to see it when I went back, [unclear 00:47:41] plain.

**Samuel:** And my return visits to Amsterdam I was terribly disappointed. You asked about the contrasts. First of all the wide boulevards weren't so wide anymore and the streets were probably the dirtiest of all the large cities in Europe and I was very disappointed.

**Edward:** You said that you weren't able to play after school as much as you'd like?

**Deborah:**  Not at all. There was no time.

**Edward:** Were you able to when you came to Newark?

**Deborah:**  In Newark we lived at the very edge of the district. It was a school district. There were no children there anymore and they were closer to, we went to Miller Street School and the children were closer to Miller Street than to where we were. There weren't that many children there.

**Samuel:** There were no school mates really.

**Edward:** What would you do with your free time after school?

**Samuel:** Well, I went 3 times to Hebrew school and the other times I guess we'd study.

**Deborah:**  Well, study and the girls had to clean house. That was our job and there wasn't that much activity. I had more of fun in Holland, I really did. First of all I was able to draw people around me to do things. It was a lot of fun. I was a real mischief maker and because there was a long period between the morning session and the afternoon session, about 2 hours and I knew I would have to stay after school I would ask my mother, please let me go shopping.

I feel like going shopping and then at least the time spent staying after school I could say the store was terribly crowded and there was no problems and that's how I got out of those but we did have more fun.

The school I went to the principal taught normal school also and they used our school for practice teaching. These young men, they were only men were such novices. It was like having a substitute in your class. We had a lot of fun with them.

**Samuel:** I recall basically at first I was disappointed with teachers since my sister mentioned the question of teachers. By and large I felt they were not challenging enough until I came across one teacher at the very school that my sister attended also and she was very keen. She once asked in a math, that was Mrs. Maguire at the Miller Street School and she posed the following question to the class.

**“**If an elephant weighs 4,000 pounds while standing on 4 feet, how much will it weigh standing on 2 feet?” I knew the answer would be the same, but I thought she wanted the answer 2,000 so I put down 2,000. Later on she pointed out she wanted the correct answer which is the same.

**Edward:** Okay. Thank you very much that was very interesting. We’re at the end of side 2 of tape one. This is the end of the interview with Miss Deborah Sachs and Mr. Sam Gross.

**Deborah:**  Actually Dr. Sam Gross.

**Edward:** Dr. Sam Gross, her brother.