**Dennis:** November 29th, 1983. This is the Ellis Island Oral History Program. Dennis [? Cletiere 00:00:05] at the mike. What's your name?

**Molly:** Molly Schuback.

**Dennis:** When and where were you born?

**Molly:** In Russia.

**Dennis:** What part of Russia?

**Molly:** I think it was in Poland, near Poland.

**Dennis:** In what year?

**Molly:** 1908.

**Dennis:** How old were you when you came to this country?

**Molly:** I was about 4 1/2, 5 years old.

**Dennis:** Any idea where you left from?

**Molly:** We left from [inaudible 00:00:40]. That's a part of Poland, I think.

**Dennis:** [inaudible 00:00:48] the voyage, how long it was?

**Molly:** The voyage was about two weeks. We had a ball on the boat because we were kids. We didn't know anything. My sister and I, she's about two years older than me, and when we came on the boat... first place, I didn't know it was the boat. I kept asking my mother, so where's the boat and where's the boat? We came in, it was on a Friday night and the Jewish people put up candles, so she said, "This is the boat," and we couldn't believe it because it was a great big thing and the candles were burning.

I thought I was in the house. The trip was very nice although one of my sisters and my mother couldn't take it too well. But I and my sister, the one that's next to me, we had a ball and the help on the boat was so fond of us that they gave us anything we wanted. It was really very pleasant for us.

**Dennis:** So you didn't get sick or anything?

**Molly:** No, my mother and my other sister were sick for about two days. They slept, but we took it lovely and we had a good time.

**Dennis:** Were you traveling in steerage or were you in cabins?

**Molly:** I think with were in cabins. Yeah, we had a nice trip.

**Dennis:** How many people did you travel with?

**Molly:** Let's see. We were three girls and one boy, four children and my mother.

**Dennis:** Where was your father?

**Molly:** My father was here already. He was here for two years and then he sent for the family.

**Dennis:** What did he do here?

**Molly:** He worked ladies' shoes. He made ladies shoes.

**Dennis:** Did he do the same trade in Russia?

**Molly:** Yes, in Russia, he was on his own. Here he worked with someone.

**Dennis:** Where did you move to when you got here?

**Molly:** We moved in with a cousin of mine until my mother got an apartment. I remember we lived in the downtown, in Brooklyn on Atlantic Avenue.

**Dennis:** Any idea what the name of the ship was?

**Molly:** Rotterdam... I have all that information. We needed it for something and I meant to look it up and show it all to you and I didn't get the chance to.

**Dennis:** Oh well. But the Rotterdam, it was called.

**Molly:** I think it was the Rotterdam.

**Dennis:** The reason you came to the United States was for better jobs?

**Molly:** I suppose so. My father came here and then he got himself settled in a job and then he sent for his family.

**Dennis:** Did you ever talk to your mother in later years about what Russia was like in those days?

**Molly:** Oh we often spoke about it. We kept reminiscing. My oldest sister remembered more than I did. She was about nine when she came here, so naturally she remembered more than I did but I remember quite a bit. I remember the trip. I remember when we got off the boat. I remember a lot of things.

**Dennis:** So when you got off the boat, you went to Ellis Island. How was it there?

**Molly:** Well, all I remember there was seeing luggage and a lot of people. I think over there is where they gave you the medical examination and somehow they were a little hesitant on me with my eyes although I never had trouble since.

We were held over a little while but then we were let go. We also didn't have the ferry like the boat you have here taking you to the Ellis Island, but we had little boats, more boats, I remember, going onto.

**Dennis:** How long did you stay over there? Overnight?

**Molly:** No, no.

**Dennis:** It's just for a little while.

**Molly:** It's just a little while. They sent from one to another and everything was okay and we came through.

**Dennis:** They probably thought you had trachoma or something.

**Molly:** I don't know what it was but we went right through the same day.

**Dennis:** Did you have any exit papers or any documents that you brought with you from Russia?

**Molly:** No, not that I know of.

**Dennis:** Of course when you're four and a half, you don't remember something trivial like that.

**Molly:** No, I don't remember that.

**Dennis:** On Ellis Island, you remember luggage?

**Molly:** I remember loads of luggage and so many people walking back and forth. I even remember the door that we walked out of. I showed it to my children and they were stunned. I remember the trip. I remember everything. I mean most of the things that interested me.

**Dennis:** As a child.

**Molly:** As a child, yeah.

**Dennis:** Lots of people.

**Molly:** Lots of people with their baggage. One kid was running here, so many children. It was fun to me.

**Dennis:** Sounds like a good time.

**Molly:** It was fun to me although I don't think it was fun for others, but as a child, to me it was fun.

**Dennis:** A new adventure.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Dennis:** As a new comer to America, what do you remember, as a new strange country?

**Molly:** I remember my cousin taking... the first thing she did was enter us into school. We felt funny. Naturally we didn't know the language, but we got it fast enough. And that's all.

**Dennis:** You pick up things really quickly when you're that young.

**Molly:** Yeah, and you were interested in everything. Everything seemed to... You wanted to know everything so you pick it up fast.

**Dennis:** Do you still speak Russian?

**Molly:** I don't speak Russian. I speak Jewish.

**Dennis:** Jewish?

**Molly:** Yes.

**Dennis:** Do you still speak it?

**Molly:** Oh, yes. I speak a very good Jewish.

**Dennis:** Yiddish.

**Molly:** Because my mother and father didn't speak it too well. My mother spoke a little better than my father did, but my father didn't speak English at all. He understood what we spoke to him, but he couldn't speak it.

**Dennis:** What was your first job here in America?

**Molly:** My first job was... I was a typist, and I married my husband from there.

**Dennis:** Was he an immigrant also?

**Molly:** No, he was American born.

**Dennis:** Well had you heard anything about America or Ellis Island before you came here that you can remember?

**Molly:** No.

**Dennis:** Did you know anyone that was sent back from America because of reasons?

**Molly:** Yes, my father's brother that was traveling with us and they sent him back. I don't remember the reason. We had problems there because he carried the money with him and my mother had... I remember that she had problems getting to him to get the money on our way that we were traveling because he carried everything. But that's about all I remember. Why they sent him back, I don't know.

**Dennis:** Did he ever make it to America?

**Molly:** No.

**Dennis:** Traumatic.

**Molly:** Yeah, my father's brother.

**Dennis:** Did any other relatives join you here in America?

**Molly:** Well after a number of years, in fact in 1950 we had a cousin that came over and they were here for a while and they moved to Israel and then both of them passed away.

**Dennis:** Did you ever go back to Europe?

**Molly:** No.

**Dennis:** Never?

**Molly:** I'd love to.

**Dennis:** I bet.

**Molly:** See what everything is like. Although I remember the house we lived in and it had a little pond on the outside and then in the summer time, it was like a little country place where we lived. I remember in the summer time, we'd sit on the doorstep and we'd watch the cows going to pasture.

It was a beautiful scene, beautiful place. It was more or less of a country and I remember that. I remember that so well I can just see everything in front of me. In the wintertime, we used to go skating on the pond. It was nice.

**Dennis:** Did you remember.... Did you... That wasn't what I was going to say. So you got married, and did you have any children?

**Molly:** I had one daughter.

**Dennis:** Did you live anywhere else in this country other than New York?

**Molly:** No.

**Dennis:** Brooklyn all the way?

**Molly:** Brooklyn all the way.

**Dennis:** Do you enjoy America now as much as then when you first arrived?

**Molly:** Well it's different now. After all I'm an old lady now. When I came I was a kid. I was married. I was 18 years old. I started to work I was 15.

**Dennis:** As a typist?

**Molly:** As a typist. Then I married the boss' brother and that was it.

**Dennis:** America has changed.

**Molly:** Lo and how, I'll tell you, it was much better then. Although people didn't have much but the demand wasn't as much as it is today. We never had too much. We were a big family. My mother had six children. Years ago, people didn't earn so much but they were satisfied with what they earned and you had a happy life. It was a very close family and we enjoyed it. It isn't that way today. Even when we got married, we all stayed around the same area where my parents were. Today one child is here, this one is there and it just isn't as close as we were years ago. That's what it is.

**Dennis:** That's how it is.

**Molly:** When you get married each one goes with their own families.

**Dennis:** When you first arrived here, was there anything unusual that you had never seen before? For instance the last interview we mentioned about how she couldn't figure out how the clothes would be hanging five stories up. How would they get to them? Things like that.

**Molly:** I remember one thing, we were given bananas and we didn't have that. I looked at it and I didn't even know what you have to do with it. That was a funny thing. We often talk about it when my older sister was alive. She remembered more than I did and we used to sit and reminisce. It was so interesting, even today. My daughter and my son-in-law took me to Ellis Island and my granddaughter was with us.

When she heard me talking about the different things, they were so interested and they were so enthused about it and they got such a kick out of it, you have no idea. They enjoyed it more than I did, knowing where I came from. Then when I walked into the building, it was so dilapidated now, it was terrible. I remember it was all lit up, and so many people there and luggage standing wherever you went, you fell over it. But it's a different life today.

**Dennis:** Did you eat a meal on Ellis Island?

**Molly:** No.

**Dennis:** In and out real quick.

**Molly:** No, my father picked us up and he took us to this cousin where we stayed a little while, she had a big place, until they got an apartment and we moved.

**Dennis:** Did your father meet you on Ellis Island?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Dennis:** You took a small boat back, you say?

**Molly:** It was a small thing. I remember correctly because we had to step over it. That's what I remember. Today it's great big boats they go on.

**Dennis:** No, there used to be a ferry also that came back and forth between Manhattan and Ellis Island.

**Molly:** I don't remember that. Then we took, I think, a trolley car to the place where we stayed.

**Dennis:** That must have been a shock.

**Molly:** Yeah, we got on it. I didn't know what it was.

**Dennis:** Is there anything else you would like to relate to?

**Molly:** What else can I tell you?

**Dennis:** Are you glad you made it, in America?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Dennis:** You think your life would have been a lot different in Russia?

**Molly:** I don't know. Things are different all the time in Russia. Naturally over here it's entirely different. Life here is different. Although people were very happy there, maybe they didn't know any better so they were contented with what they had. But naturally it's different. I'd love to make a trip back to see what its like, where I came from but it must be so different there now just as well here.

**Dennis:** You can never go home.

**Molly:** No.

**Dennis:** So what'd you finally do with that banana?

**Molly:** Ooh, you know I started to eat it with the skin and all. We often talk about it and we laugh. It's [inaudible 00:16:06].

**Dennis:** You bite it like an apple.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Dennis:** Well, I think that's all I have to say, Molly. Thanks a lot.

**Molly:** I hope I'll hear myself someday. Can you put it on and turn it back?

**Dennis:** You'll hear it right now.