

EXODUS Project
Interview of Rita Bosina
September 15, 2016

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Rita Bosina.mp4
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Interviewer: So I'm going to start asking questions.

Rita Bosina: Okay.

Interviewer: Why did you decide to come to America?

Rita Bosina: I've got two sons and the oldest was to go to military and for Jewish people very dangerous to go to Russian military. My older brother almost got killed so I decide to safe life of my sons.

Interviewer: When did you come to America?

Rita Bosina: It was May 25th, '79.

Interviewer: Did you choose to come to America or were you forced to come?

Rita Bosina: Nobody forced me.

Interviewer: Who came with you?

Rita Bosina: My parents and both sons.

Interviewer: If you had a chance to go back, would you?

Rita Bosina: No.

Interviewer: Why or why not?

Rita Bosina: [Laughing] No.

Interviewer: Why not?

Rita Bosina: If I left for this reasons, why would go back?

Interviewer: Okay. What was the process of your immigration? How did you get here?

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Rita Bosina: It wasn't easy. It...I got a cousin and his wife, he's a doctor but his wife wasn't working at this time so she could stand in lines. This was like six or seven months before they got permission and they stay in line. I have to work and I cannot...I don't have any patience to stay in lines to go to...it's named _____, place where they let you have this permission to go. And what else did you ask me? What other question?

Interviewer: How did you get here?

Rita Bosina: Why I decide Memphis?

Interviewer: How did you get here? Yeah.

Rita Bosina: It's an organization, huge organization. HIAS, do you know this HIAS?

Interviewer2: I've heard of it, yeah.

Rita Bosina: And they help all European people and especially Ukrainian, how I know, because we from Ukraine, to leave Russia so they got agreement to be at Russia to let Jewish people out and we pay. Sure we pay, every single person we have to pay and I pay every pennies what they paid for us and I appreciate them. It's lifesaving for both of my sons. [video cuts] Like I told you right now, I had no choice. I want to say if my older son would go to military and hopefully he would survive, another son would be next and be stuck over there, like, for 15 years so...and I want to tell you while I'm waiting, cute story, maybe take your time as well. We came to military place where we have to get permission to leave, and the guy _____ us, he was so stunned when he saw us and he said, "You're so lucky. This is letter what I have to send today." He could hide it and we'd be stuck over there. He let us go. Make me cry.

Interviewer2: That's beautiful.

Rita Bosina: Yeah. And I wish I would know the guy now. I would send him everything. I wish I would know.

Interviewer2: Know where he lives, yeah.

Rita Bosina: I don't know anything about him, no name, anything. I wish I would know but I appreciate this always in my head. Always.

Interviewer2: Yeah. That's so special.

Rita Bosina: Yeah, it's very...

Interviewer2: Okay, Anthony.

Anthony: Was money a problem?

Rita Bosina: Money to pay for to leave Russia. Actually money was from...not from Kiev. In Kiev we paid on our son. Later when we went to Australia...Vienna. No, sorry, Austria, Vienna and from there they paying for us. We got some amount, a very little amount, for food but we are good and we paid off when came here, start working. We paid off everything. I already said this. Why I'm saying is because I'm so proud of myself. [Laughing]

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Interviewer2: Of course.

Rita Bosina: Working by myself. I had two sons, two parents who could not work. I don't know how I did everything ____.

Anthony: Okay. How did you start your life?

Rita Bosina: Here?

Anthony: Yeah.

Rita Bosina: We came and Dr. **Wruble** family adopt us. Even don't know who we are and when I asked Diane **Wruble** how you decide my family she said, "I look in the papers and I see you got two sons and two parents and you needed help." And she said, "And I can help you." So I'm ____ every day to now and then **June** meet us ____ and she said, "When I meet you guys, I'm adopting you." And another family, ____ family, anybody knows?

Interviewer2: Yes, I know them.

Rita Bosina: _____. They adopt us, too. Officially went to JCC and adopt us when they meet us. So I think we blessed. Really blessed.

Anthony: Did you have family in America?

Rita Bosina: Yes we did but I never know about...I never meet them, I never...we didn't communicate with them. Yes, we did got my mother's cousin and his whole family and when we came here he came with his wife and meet us and it's a blessing, too. Very, very, very nice people.

Anthony: So they, like, helped you and stuff?

Rita Bosina: No, we didn't ask for help. No, we didn't ask for help and I never ask for anybody to give me money. I never ask for any money and we did as much as we can ourself and that's why I'm proud of myself.

Interviewer2: Very proud. You should be.

Rita Bosina: I don't know. I would knit sweaters, I was making clothes, I'm a clothes designer, and people would buy them, would come to my home and say, "This, I want it today." So I would finish everything and then got it here, too. It's official, going to the store, working at the store. Can you hear me?

Interviewer2: Yeah, it's beautiful.

Anthony: Was the language an issue? Did you know it?

Rita Bosina: What is it?

Interviewer: Was the language an issue?

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Interviewer2: English.

Rita Bosina: You mean English? For me, yes. Because I took German in college and know Russian, know Ukrainian, know German, but I didn't know English and...no. I learned it here and it's hard to say how I managed, it is hard to say, but I got dictionary and looking at the words and looking at people's eyes and listening to them, what are they talking about and **getting** answers. ____ Do you know? It helped me communicate.

Anthony: Were you homesick?

Rita Bosina: Homesick.

Anthony: Or did you leave anyone behind?

Rita Bosina: **Sweetie**, it's not a home for people like us. Not at all. If I'm leaving place like this, I'm saving my sons, it's not home.

Anthony: Did you leave anyone behind?

Rita Bosina: Yes. We got...I got two brothers with families and they came 10 years later to move in Memphis and they live in Memphis and big families so they got sons and grandkids, they all here.

Anthony: Okay. [video cuts]

Interviewer3: What was the biggest shock that you had once you came to America?

Rita Bosina: Shock?

Interviewer3: Yeah, the biggest surprise.

Rita Bosina: Surprise been again I'm coming back to Dr. **Wruble** and people, Iris Harkavy and all this, JCC, they all been around us like wrapping us. Like care about us and we came and this has been...my apartment was been all furnished. I mean, it's not a new one but everything there for us. And we never think it's good, not good, we just...I think we blessed to come to Memphis and this is why I choose Memphis because I know people will care and I will know the inner heart of a city, of United States for my sons and my parents.

Interviewer3: Did you or those who came with you get a job and what was it?

Rita Bosina: No, parents cannot work. Actually that's a good question because we clean houses if people let us. We have to make living because ____ start working as a beautician and like I said, I make clothes and sweaters so we did. People ask us, ask people to...if we can do it and people let us do it. We clean houses, all family together. My sons, my parents, everybody together. Even my Russian friends who we meet here would go with me and help us to clean. It's hard questions. It look like easy but it's kind of touching me. [Laughing]

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Interviewer2: Yeah, I'm emotional, too.

Rita Bosina: See, you're emotional. I'm too emotional. [Laughing]

Interviewer2: I cried ____ spoke to you guys.

Rita Bosina: It is...it is...when you think about how people give, how people try to help. Sorry, I didn't mean to.

Interviewer3: That's fine. It's fine. Were the people in Memphis helpful with any problems that you had? You've spoken about...

Rita Bosina: More help?

Interviewer3: Yeah, it was...

Rita Bosina: More help than what I said? Again, it comes to people who I know so well. When we came, we meet people and I make clothes and again, I come back and back to Iris Harkavy and Diane and other people, **John**. They would come and say, "This what I wanted. This dress I wanted, this dress I want, I want you to make for me some of this. I want you to do for me sweater." And everybody came for haircuts and I got Sam, it's Fantastic Sam guy, we start working over there. First I start working over there and he was teaching me every single things, how to be around in a business, how to be in life, and how to learn how to live in United States. Unfortunately, he died now but he was the best guy, stranger, first time who I meet. He's a Jewish guy and he tried to help as much as he can with everything.

Interviewer3: What...overall was America at all what you expected when you heard about it originally?

Rita Bosina: I cannot say I expected at all. I just want leave and I want to take my parents and my sons. I can't say I expect anything. I even don't know how to answer more on this question. I wasn't expecting anything.

Interviewer2: You wanted to leave Russia. You wanted to leave Russia.

Rita Bosina: Yeah.

Interviewer2: So much so that you didn't expect anything. You just...

Rita Bosina: I didn't expect anything. I just...I just appreciate everything. I just know from immigration center when we were in Austria, you know, and we know ____ people in Russia, people in United States, Jewish people helping people who come from Europe. But expect? No. I didn't expect anything.

Interviewer3: If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently?

Rita Bosina: I would do the same.

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Interviewer3: The same?

Rita Bosina: I would do the same. I would take my parents and kids and I would come to Memphis. I love Memphis and I love people in Memphis who is the dearest things what happened to me including **Annette**.

Interviewer2: I love you.

Rita Bosina: I love you, too. I don't know why I'm this way. [Laughing] [video cuts]
Lynn Franklin, when we came we find out she was _____ house and she was neighbors at the same apartment across this...my apartment and she would been there and teaching us and another non Jewish people, teaching us how we going to the store and how if you don't understand what is this, look at the picture of everything what you see. Like this. You don't have to read. You know what it is. Maybe you don't know it's Coke or Sprite, but you know what exactly it is so...bread or something. You just see things. So this is why they said...even not Jewish people, when we meet people later they were with us being...like hand by hand. I think very, very, very blessed in Memphis, everybody around us. We still the same.

Interviewer2: Yeah.

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