

Henrietta Palmer Ancestry History Interview

by Carter Johnston 1993.doc

1 CARTER: Hello, Henrietta. This is Carter Johnston
2 calling from San Diego once again. I'm calling from Don
3 Moses' office.

4 HENRIETTA: Oh yeah.

5 CARTER: I--I'm sorry to be calling so late.

6 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

7 CARTER: If I've--if it's too late, I'll be happy
8 to call back another time.

9 HENRIETTA: No, you won't. I'd be happy to talk to
10 you.

11 CARTER: Oh, thank you so much.

12 HENRIETTA: It's just that I'm half asleep, you
13 know.

14 CARTER: I understand it. I apologize for calling
15 so late, but I wanted to get where I could get a good tape
16 recorder on the telephone, because I wanted to see if you
17 couldn't tell me some of those--some of the stories that you
18 told about the family, once again. And I didn't take good
19 enough notes to get all the--

20 HENRIETTA: Well--

21 CARTER: --the details straight.

22 HENRIETTA: Well, you didn't know what you were
23 going to hear. That's why you didn't.

24 CARTER: [laughing]

25 HENRIETTA: You know what I mean?

1 CARTER: Yes, I do.

2 HENRIETTA: You know you're gonna to hear some
3 earth-shaking news, you get your pencil and paper right away.

4 CARTER: That's exactly right.

5 HENRIETTA: But when you don't know what's coming,
6 you--you're not prepared.

7 CARTER: That's right. So I wondered if you could
8 tell me a little bit about Carolina Schubert and--and if you
9 knew anything about her mother, Rosa, and a little more about
10 Avrom Engel and--and Carolina's husband Adolph--

11 HENRIETTA: Oh, honey, I--I told you all I know
12 then. You mean you don't remember anything?

13 CARTER: Oh, I do. I just wanted to make sure I
14 got the details right.

15 HENRIETTA: You got the details right because you
16 repeated everything after me.

17 CARTER: Okay. Let me just check, see if I got
18 this right now. Adolph came from Germany to Romania when
19 he--

20 HENRIETTA: Yes.

21 CARTER: --when he met Carolina playing in the
22 street. He was born in Vienna, is that right?

23 HENRIETTA: Right. Yeah.

24 CARTER: And if I remember the story right, he was
25 on the streets in Romania and he saw little Carolina, who was

1 about 14 at the time, playing with her friends and her family
2 on the stoop--

3 HENRIETTA: That wasn't Caroline. My grandmother's
4 name was Hayia Devora. I don't know what it's in English.

5 CARTER: It's Hayia Devora?

6 HENRIETTA: Yeah. That's not Caroline.

7 CARTER: Okay. Did I get the wrong person, then?
8 This is the wife of Adolph Schubert? I mean Adolph Engel?

9 HENRIETTA: Oh. Adolph Engel, no. No, she--she
10 was Rosa Schubert.

11 CARTER: Rosa Schubert was--

12 HENRIETTA: Yeah, my grandmother.

13 CARTER: Okay. Okay. Well, I--now see, that's
14 part of why I wanted to call back, because I--I got--I got
15 mixed up. All right. Let me see.

16 HENRIETTA: I--I don't remember any Carolina. I
17 don't know where you got the name Carolina.

18 CARTER: Oh. Okay. All right.

19 HENRIETTA: All I remember, that's my--my
20 grandmother's mother.

21 CARTER: Rosa Schubert was your grand--

22 HENRIETTA: My mother's mother.

23 CARTER: Your mother's mother was Rosa Schubert.

24 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

25 CARTER: Okay. And she was married to Adolph

1 Engel?

2 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

3 CARTER: I see. And tell me her name again, Rosa--
4 the name that you just said?

5 HENRIETTA: Schubert.

6 CARTER: The--

7 HENRIETTA: Rosa.

8 CARTER: But the first name? Didn't you give me
9 another name just a little while ago?

10 HENRIETTA: Hayia Devora.

11 CARTER: Hayia Devora. Yes.

12 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

13 CARTER: That--that's the same person as Rosa?

14 HENRIETTA: I know--I know I'm named after my
15 mother's mother. That's all I can tell you.

16 CARTER: Okay.

17 HENRIETTA: All I remember is she told me that--I
18 can't remember if it was her mother or her grandmother. Or--
19 or her mother's mother that was a Schubert.

20 CARTER: Okay.

21 HENRIETTA: I don't remember that part.

22 CARTER: All right.

23 HENRIETTA: But I do remember that--how he met my
24 grandmother.

25 CARTER: Okay.

1 HENRIETTA: It's grandmother, yeah.

2 CARTER: All right. And then--

3 HENRIETTA: My grandmother.

4 CARTER: And that's--and met your grandmother--

5 HENRIETTA: Yeah. He was--he was on assignment,
6 you know, for the government from Germany.

7 CARTER: He was on assignment from the German
8 government?

9 HENRIETTA: Yes.

10 CARTER: Uh-huh.

11 HENRIETTA: And he would--he had to go to Romania,
12 and he sees this little 14-year-old girl playing in the
13 street, and he fell in love with her. But he married her,
14 but he didn't marry her 'til she was 17. But she--she--he
15 bought her from her mother and father.

16 CARTER: Uh-huh.

17 HENRIETTA: You know what I mean? Not with money--

18 CARTER: He--he--

19 HENRIETTA: --but with promises that she would be
20 well taken care of. And--and he educated her so that she
21 could live in the social life.

22 CARTER: Uh-huh.

23 HENRIETTA: 'Cause they were just, you know, poor
24 people. And--and then when she was 17 years old, he married
25 her. And that was the picture I was tellin' you I had of her

1 where she married him.

2 CARTER: Yes.

3 HENRIETTA: He was 40 years old, and she was 17.

4 CARTER: Okay. Did she ever come to the United
5 States?

6 HENRIETTA: No. No.

7 CARTER: She never did.

8 HENRIETTA: No, my mother didn't come to the United
9 States until her mother died.

10 CARTER: Ah.

11 HENRIETTA: See, now her brother, Engel--Avrom
12 Engel--have you got that?

13 CARTER: Her brother Avrom Engel.

14 HENRIETTA: Engel. He--so she was married to an
15 Engel, my mother--my mother's mother.

16 CARTER: Yes, uh-huh.

17 HENRIETTA: Yeah, so he--he came first.

18 CARTER: Okay.

19 HENRIETTA: And he wanted--he wanted my mother to
20 come over, but she said she wouldn't leave her mother. But
21 when her mother died, then she came to America. My mother.
22 So her mother never came to America.

23 CARTER: Okay.

24 HENRIETTA: She died in Romania.

25 CARTER: She--okay. Did she live to be a very--

1 very old age?

2 HENRIETTA: No. I wouldn't say so. My mother was
3 about 25 when she came here.

4 CARTER: Okay.

5 HENRIETTA: So--and she was a--

6 CARTER: Did she come in about the year 18--1900 or
7 so?

8 HENRIETTA: Somewhere around there, yes--

9 CARTER: Yes. Yes, okay. Yes. So her mother died
10 in 1900. Your grandmother died in 1900 at age 37, according
11 to this sheet--

12 HENRIETTA: Is that right?

13 CARTER: --that I have. Uh-huh.

14 HENRIETTA: Well, you see, I told you she wasn't
15 very old.

16 CARTER: Yes, you're absolutely right.

17 HENRIETTA: But she couldn't've been have been 37.

18 CARTER: Okay.

19 HENRIETTA: Oh, no. 'Cause my mother was 25 when
20 she came here.

21 CARTER: Well, that was five years--

22 HENRIETTA: And that was after her mother died.

23 CARTER: Yeah.

24 HENRIETTA: So how could a woman 37 have a 25-year-
25 old daught--my--my--my gran--my mother wasn't the oldest one.

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CARTER: No--

HENRIETTA: The two brothers were the oldest ones.

CARTER: That would be Avrom and--and Albert?

HENRIETTA: And Albert, yes.

CARTER: Uh-huh.

HENRIETTA: Yes. And then her sister and her came next.

CARTER: Okay.

HENRIETTA: And then her--I told you her husband died when they were very young.

CARTER: This is Adolph Engel?

HENRIETTA: Yeah, he died when they were very young.

CARTER: Uh-huh.

HENRIETTA: And she married again to Mr. Cheifer, C-H-E-I-F-E-R.

CARTER: Okay. Now, I have--

HENRIETTA: That's my grandmother I'm talkin' about.

CARTER: Yes, uh-huh. And then she had a daughter named Rebecca.

HENRIETTA: Rebecca with the second husband. Yes.

CARTER: Right. Okay. All right.

HENRIETTA: And my mother and Rebecca were more devoted sisters than she was with her own sister. Isn't that

1 something?

2 CARTER: Why--why--

3 HENRIETTA: Even though that was her half-sister.

4 CARTER: Uh-huh. Tell me about how she came to
5 marry--we're talking about your mother now--tell me about how
6 Jena came to marry--Jennie came to marry Aaron Greenberg.

7 HENRIETTA: Oh, I--I told you that story, didn't I?

8 CARTER: Uh-huh.

9 HENRIETTA: But you want it repeated.

10 CARTER: Uh-huh.

11 HENRIETTA: Okay. She was going out with a Russian
12 Jew. You know we're Jewish, you know that?

13 CARTER: Yes, I certainly do.

14 HENRIETTA: All right. She was going with a
15 Russian Jew. And when she arrived in--when she arrived in--
16 in United States, they were living in New York. And she
17 lived with her brother, Engel--Avrom.

18 CARTER: Uh-huh.

19 HENRIETTA: And so she met this Russian Jew. And
20 she was going out with him. And my--my Uncle Avrom, he says,
21 you're not marrying no Russian. [laughter] He had met my
22 father, who was a Spanish Jew, and he said that'd be better
23 than a Russian. I don't know why--why he held it against
24 Russians; they're all Jewish.

25 CARTER: Uh-huh.

1 HENRIETTA: And he introduced my father to my
2 mother. And my mother, being the kind of--like a dutiful
3 daughter, was a dutiful sister, you know? But they really
4 fell in love 'cause my mother was a beautiful woman. That's
5 a picture I wanted you to see.

6 CARTER: Oh, I'd love to have seen it.

7 HENRIETTA: Yeah. She was beautiful. At that--I
8 have the picture of her at that age.

9 CARTER: Oh, is that right?

10 HENRIETTA: Uh-huh.

11 CARTER: Now, some day I'm going to see if I can
12 get Abe to go over and take a picture of that. So that--

13 HENRIETTA: Well, it's a tiny thing--

14 CARTER: --Don could have a copy.

15 HENRIETTA: --it's just about--oh, about five
16 inches big.

17 CARTER: Well, I'm sure Don would like to have a
18 copy, if that's at all possible.

19 HENRIETTA: Oh, I--I'd be happy to have him do
20 that.

21 CARTER: Oh, that's super.

22 HENRIETTA: I'm too old to--to go around doing
23 that--

24 CARTER: I understand--

25 HENRIETTA: --you know.

1 CARTER: --and I certainly wouldn't ask it of you.

2 HENRIETTA: Oh--

3 CARTER: Now--

4 HENRIETTA: Anyway, he--they--they met and fell in
5 love, and my god, she had seven children with him.

6 CARTER: Well that's nice. Do you know anything
7 about the age? How much older Abe--Abraham or Avrom was than
8 Jen--Jennie?

9 HENRIETTA: No, I don't. All I know is that the--
10 Adolph was the oldest, and then came Avrom, and then my
11 mother and her sister. Her sister's still living in Europe.

12 CARTER: Is that right?

13 HENRIETTA: But I don't know--

14 CARTER: This--

15 HENRIETTA: I don't know their ages.

16 CARTER: That would be Cecelia?

17 HENRIETTA: Yes.

18 CARTER: Lindestine?

19 HENRIETTA: That's her real--Lindenstine, yeah.

20 CARTER: Uh-huh.

21 CARTER: Where in Europe are they living?

22 HENRIETTA: As far as I know, Rimnicu Vilcea.

23 CARTER: Oh, okay.

24 HENRIETTA: That's--that's where my mother always
25 used to write to her.

1 CARTER: Uh-huh.

2 HENRIETTA: But I'm talkin' about when they were
3 still home.

4 CARTER: Uh-huh.

5 HENRIETTA: My mother and Cecelia were better--no,
6 what was the other one?

7 CARTER: Rebecca.

8 HENRIETTA: Rebecca. All she ever talked about,
9 what a wonderful sister Rebecca--Rebecca, Rebecca, Rebecca.
10 But I--and I thought it was a real sister until years later,
11 you know, she told me that was from the second marriage.

12 CARTER: Uh-huh. Okay.

13 HENRIETTA: So that--that I can tell--but they--she
14 still wrote to Cecelia all that time, you know, that she was
15 here.

16 CARTER: Uh-huh. Do you remember or can you tell
17 me any stories about Don or about his mother, Fritzie?

18 HENRIETTA: Yes.

19 CARTER: What--what sticks out in your mind about
20 Fritzie?

21 HENRIETTA: All I know--all I know, she was a dear,
22 devoted sister. And there's no stories. I mean, her and Abe
23 were very happy together, as far as I know.

24 CARTER: Uh-huh.

25 HENRIETTA: And did Don tell you about that he was

1 married before?

2 CARTER: Yes, I did know that, and his daughter has
3 come to visit him on occasion.

4 HENRIETTA: No kidding?

5 CARTER: Uh-huh.

6 HENRIETTA: I just wondered--I didn't know that
7 answer myself, you know, whether he was still in contact with
8 his child.

9 CARTER: Yes.

10 HENRIETTA: Oh, that's wonderful to know.

11 CARTER: Uh-huh.

12 HENRIETTA: And anyway, Fritzie was a very devoted
13 wife, very devoted housewife. My god, that house was
14 sparkling clean. She was always cleaning and cleaning and
15 cleaning, you know?

16 CARTER: Uh-huh.

17 HENRIETTA: And--and--and--and--and she had a
18 tragic death, she died from a violent case of rheumatoid
19 arthritis, whatever that is. Do you know what that is?

20 CARTER: I know it doesn't sound pleasant at all.

21 HENRIETTA: Oh, it's a most horrible disease. She
22 went to all those famous--the Mayo Clinic and those kinda
23 things, you know, and nobody could save her.

24 CARTER: Oh--

25 HENRIETTA: She died young--comparatively young,

1 you know--

2 CARTER: Yes.

3 HENRIETTA: --what I mean.

4 CARTER: Yes, I--

5 HENRIETTA: Because of the terrible pain she was
6 in. One time I went to visit her and I was commiserating,
7 she says, I would rather be dead than, you know, than suffer
8 this way.

9 CARTER: Uh-huh.

10 HENRIETTA: And sure enough, she died soon after
11 that. Very sad.

12 CARTER: Do you know anything about the Greenberg--
13 where they came from or anything about them at all?

14 HENRIETTA: Yeah, oh, I sure do. Will you hold the
15 line just a minute?

16 CARTER: Sure.

17 HENRIETTA: I've gotta take some--my throat is
18 killing me.

19 CARTER: Okay. Certainly, I understand.

20 HENRIETTA: Okay, honey.

21 I doubt if even Donnie knows this story.

22 CARTER: Okay.

23 HENRIETTA: Did Donnie tell you anything about the
24 Greenberg side?

25 CARTER: I'm not sure that he has, no.

1 HENRIETTA: My father's a Spanish Jew. And how we
2 wound up in--in Detroit--you wanna hear that part, too--

3 CARTER: Yes, I would.

4 HENRIETTA: Oh god, that's a story. That's a story
5 that I could write--if I could write, I would write a book
6 about it. My father's family were chased from Spain in 1492
7 because they were Jews.

8 CARTER: Uh-huh.

9 HENRIETTA: But Queen Isabella didn't kill 'em.
10 She just said, either you kiss the cross--or she said it in a
11 different way. She said, you may kiss the cross and remain
12 here. If you don't then you're free to go. Now that was--
13 that was what a lady does, you know what I mean?

14 CARTER: Uh-huh.

15 HENRIETTA: Hitler just killed 'em outright.

16 CARTER: Yes.

17 HENRIETTA: You know the difference?

18 CARTER: Oh, I certainly do.

19 HENRIETTA: You know what I mean in the meaning, I
20 mean?

21 CARTER: Yes, I do.

22 HENRIETTA: And--but there was three brothers. Two
23 of 'em decided to kiss the cross and remained. Ya hear?

24 CARTER: Yes.

25 HENRIETTA: They became millionaires.

1 CARTER: [laughing]

2 HENRIETTA: My par--my ancestors didn't--were too
3 outraged to do such a thing. And Romania, knowing of the
4 plight of the Jews in Spain, had sent out--what do you call
5 those people that make announcements?

6 CARTER: An emissary?

7 HENRIETTA: Yes. Sent emissaries to the Spanish
8 Jews in Spain and said, if you come to Romania and till the
9 soil--they needed somebody to till the fields, you know.

10 CARTER: Uh-huh.

11 HENRIETTA: And if you come to Romania, we'll give
12 you free citizenship.

13 CARTER: Oh.

14 HENRIETTA: You know what that means? It means
15 they could live next door to a gentile person.

16 CARTER: Oh, I see.

17 HENRIETTA: Now, did you ever hear a story like
18 that?

19 CARTER: Never, never before.

20 HENRIETTA: Mmm hmm. So my--my ancestors decided
21 to go to Romania rather than kiss the cross.

22 CARTER: I see.

23 HENRIETTA: The others had a picture of Christ in
24 the living room, and a--and a--and a--and a--what do you
25 call--

1 CARTER: A cross? A crucifix?

2 HENRIETTA: --a church--a church. Our Jewish
3 church--

4 CARTER: Oh, a synagogue?

5 HENRIETTA: A synagogue! Oy, god, now you know I'm
6 sleepy.

7 CARTER: [laughter]

8 [Recording Stops and Continues on Reverse Side]

9 HENRIETTA: --parts of Spain on account of the
10 Germans, you know.

11 CARTER: Uh-huh.

12 HENRIETTA: And these houses fell apart, and they
13 discovered those hidden basements.

14 CARTER: In the property of your ancestors' homes?

15 HENRIETTA: Yes. Yes.

16 CARTER: And they--

17 HENRIETTA: Not just my ancestor, a lot of Jews
18 kissed the cross and then they practiced their religion down
19 the basement.

20 CARTER: I see.

21 HENRIETTA: Jew--and I understand--so a lot of
22 homes were exposed with that.

23 CARTER: So--

24 HENRIETTA: And my--my ancestors were one of 'em.

25 CARTER: So up in the living rooms they had crosses

1 and pictures of Christ--

2 HENRIETTA: Uh-huh.

3 CARTER: --but their real religion and their faith
4 was as intact as it was in 1500, then.

5 HENRIETTA: What do you think of that?

6 CARTER: I think that's fabulous--

7 HENRIETTA: Those homes were still existing until
8 the--the Allies and the Germans bombed the--the cities, you
9 know.

10 CARTER: Uh-huh.

11 HENRIETTA: Isn't that amazing story?

12 CARTER: It certainly is.

13 HENRIETTA: And when I read that in the newspaper,
14 my--my--oh, one of my relatives went to Spain. I can't
15 remember which one it was right now. And they saw it with
16 their own eyes--

17 CARTER: Oh.

18 HENRIETTA: --at that time.

19 CARTER: Uh-huh.

20 HENRIETTA: Imagine that?

21 CARTER: Yes.

22 HENRIETTA: Can you believe this?

23 CARTER: [laughing]

24 HENRIETTA: You think I'm--I'm kid--cooking up a
25 story? Just inquire in the library.

1 CARTER: Oh, I--I certainly--

2 HENRIETTA: You probably will--

3 CARTER: --believe you.

4 HENRIETTA: --hear it. Anyway. So then my--and
5 like I said, free citizenship meant you could live right next
6 door to--to a gentile.

7 CARTER: Uh-huh.

8 HENRIETTA: Now in Russia, they took the Jews in,
9 too, but they made 'em stay in the kibbutz. You know what a
10 kibbutz is?

11 CARTER: Yes, I do. Like a commune?

12 HENRIETTA: That's right. And they would lock the
13 gates if you weren't at home by 6:00. You hear?

14 CARTER: Yes.

15 HENRIETTA: They would lock it, and you'd have to
16 sit--sleep outside in the--on the ground.

17 CARTER: Oh my.

18 HENRIETTA: That's the difference between free
19 citizenship and a--a kibbutz.

20 CARTER: Uh-huh.

21 HENRIETTA: Which is like a prison.

22 CARTER: Yes.

23 HENRIETTA: Let's put it that way. They were faced
24 with gates.

25 CARTER: Oh, yeah.

1 HENRIETTA: How do you like that?

2 CARTER: Well, that sounds pretty awful to me.

3 Okay.

4 HENRIETTA: Well, I didn't finish it.

5 CARTER: Go ahead.

6 HENRIETTA: From 1492 'til my time, each generation
7 of my father's family taught their children the Spanish
8 language. And believe it or not, my father taught me Spanish
9 from Spain.

10 CARTER: Is that--

11 HENRIETTA: From his ancestors. I mean, he'd went
12 down the line.

13 CARTER: Uh-huh.

14 HENRIETTA: Would you believe that story?

15 CARTER: I--if you tell me it's true, I believe
16 you.

17 HENRIETTA: Now, how did my father come to Detroit?
18 There was a store, like maybe this J.C. Penney that was
19 opening up stores in the northwest.

20 CARTER: Uh-huh.

21 HENRIETTA: Dave--Moses--

22 CARTER: Abe?

23 HENRIETTA: No, not Abe, his son, Donnie--

24 CARTER: Don? Uh-huh.

25 HENRIETTA: Didn't tell you those stories, did he?

1 CARTER: No, that's correct.

2 HENRIETTA: I don't--I don't know if he knows 'em.

3 CARTER: Possibly--he'll know 'em soon.

4 HENRIETTA: He will?

5 CARTER: Because yeah, they're--I'm going to make
6 sure he does.

7 HENRIETTA: Oh, boy, I'm very thrilled to hear
8 this. 'Cause, you know, we knew it, but we didn't think of
9 telling our kids that--

10 CARTER: Uh-huh.

11 HENRIETTA: --you know what I mean?

12 CARTER: Uh-huh.

13 HENRIETTA: We knew the story. That's why I didn't
14 teach my children Spanish because I--I--it just didn't occur
15 to me, you know? I was just proud of my ancestry.

16 CARTER: Uh-huh.

17 HENRIETTA: Anyway, they were opening up stores in
18 the southwest. I'm talkin' about now--

19 CARTER: Uh-huh.

20 HENRIETTA: --you know, when my father was young.

21 CARTER: Yes.

22 HENRIETTA: And they--in Texas, there's a lot of
23 Mexicans there, and they couldn't get instructions how to run
24 the business. And so the--the manager in New York was
25 saying, I don't know what I'm gonna do. So one fella says,

1 Look, this Aaron Greenberg is a--a Spanish Jew, and he speaks
2 Spanish fluently. Why don't you send him to explain the
3 English instructions in Spanish, and then they'll get the
4 idea.

5 CARTER: Uh-huh.

6 HENRIETTA: And that's exactly what they did. They
7 sent my father to Mex--to Texas. It was San Antonio Texas.
8 And then he went from--he made it--that his home, and he went
9 to all those small towns where they were opening up the
10 stores, and got them all understanding the instructions. And
11 then--and they paid him a very nice price, you know, for
12 doing that.

13 CARTER: Yeah.

14 HENRIETTA: And meanwhile, he taught us Spanish,
15 just like his ancestors had taught him Spanish. You
16 understand?

17 CARTER: I do.

18 HENRIETTA: And I speak Spanish fluently today.
19 Would you believe that?

20 CARTER: I believe ya.

21 HENRIETTA: And I never took it up in school. You
22 know, I was telling somebody that I can speak Spanish through
23 my father. Well, I learned it in school, too. You don't
24 learn it the same way.

25 CARTER: No, you certainly--

1 HENRIETTA: You know--then you know what I'm
2 talking about.

3 CARTER: Yes.

4 HENRIETTA: You know, when you learned it--foreign
5 languages, I--I. Will. Go. With. You. You don't talk
6 like that normally, do you?

7 CARTER: That's correct.

8 HENRIETTA: You say, I will go with you.

9 CARTER: Right.

10 HENRIETTA: You know, in--in the school they teach
11 you, I. Will. Go. With. You. I. Will. See. You.
12 There. You know.

13 CARTER: Uh-huh.

14 HENRIETTA: How could you learn a language when
15 they teach it to you that way?

16 CARTER: And then you never use it outside the
17 classroom.

18 HENRIETTA: And then--yeah, well that's what
19 happened to me. Anyhow, so my mother came--she--my father
20 and mother were married in New York. And then when they sent
21 him to Texas, that's when we kids were born.

22 CARTER: Uh-huh.

23 HENRIETTA: So I was born in Texas.

24 CARTER: Uh-huh.

25 HENRIETTA: But why did we come to Detroit? 'Cause

1 that depression hit there way before it hit here.

2 CARTER: I see.

3 HENRIETTA: And my father said, what am I gonna do;
4 I got seven little kids to feed, and there's no money. So my
5 Uncle Avrom told him to come here. You--are you listening?

6 CARTER: Yes, I'm--I'm checking on my--on my sheet
7 to make sure I know who everybody you're talking about is.

8 HENRIETTA: Well, Avrom is my--don't--don't you
9 forget that my Uncle Avrom was the one that introduced my
10 father to my mother.

11 CARTER: Yes, yes. Okay.

12 HENRIETTA: And he--and my father and my mother
13 wrote to him that they're coming back to New York 'cause
14 there's a terrible depression in Texas.

15 CARTER: Ah.

16 HENRIETTA: So he says, don't go back here, we got
17 a terrible depression here, too. Go to Detroit they're--
18 they're still paying \$5.00 a day for the Ford workers. What
19 do you think of that?

20 CARTER: [laughing]

21 HENRIETTA: That's how we wound up in Detroit.
22 See?

23 CARTER: Been there ever since, so--

24 HENRIETTA: Are you--huh?

25 CARTER: You been there ever since.

1 HENRIETTA: That's right.

2 CARTER: That's right. Do you know anything about
3 your grandfather Greenberg, or--or your grandmother on the
4 Greenberg side?

5 HENRIETTA: No.

6 CARTER: Okay.

7 HENRIETTA: All--all--oh, I do know a couple of
8 things.

9 CARTER: Okay.

10 HENRIETTA: But not too much 'cause they were still
11 in Europe, you know. Oh, what was I gonna say? Oh god. Oh,
12 my father was born to my mom--his mother--am I saying
13 somethin' right?

14 CARTER: Yeah. That's--so far it's right.

15 HENRIETTA: She was 60 years old when he was born.

16 CARTER: Is that right?

17 HENRIETTA: That's right.

18 CARTER: Okay.

19 HENRIETTA: And he was a--what do you call it--
20 change of life baby.

21 CARTER: Uh-huh.

22 HENRIETTA: And so this--this is my story--that I
23 said to my father one day. He shows me a picture, beautiful
24 woman, you know, I thought it was his mother. Then I--he
25 shows me another picture. He says, that's me and my mother.

1 Well I says, I thought you said that one was your mother.
2 Well he says, I always called her Mother. Because his real
3 mother was too old to take care of him. So, she turned him
4 over to her oldest daughter, who had two small children of
5 her own, and he grew to love that mother even more than his
6 own mother.

7 CARTER: Oh my.

8 HENRIETTA: Isn't that a story?

9 CARTER: Yes. That is.

10 HENRIETTA: I told you I've got stories to tell
11 you. But I--

12 CARTER: What--what was his mother's name, do you
13 recall?

14 HENRIETTA: Oh god no.

15 CARTER: Could it have been Esther?

16 HENRIETTA: Yes, Esther.

17 CARTER: Esther Levy--

18 HENRIETTA: You took the words right out of my
19 mouth.

20 CARTER: [laughter] Do you know his father's name?
21 His father's first name?

22 HENRIETTA: No. Uh-uh.

23 CARTER: Okay. And so he must have had other--
24 well, he did. He had a sister that raised him.

25 HENRIETTA: Yes. Oh yeah, and he wrote to her

1 constantly when he was in America. 'Cause I remember he
2 always--my mother was jealous 'cause he was always writin'
3 letters to his sister. But you understand that the first
4 picture, she--she was older than him--

5 CARTER: Uh-huh.

6 HENRIETTA: --you know.

7 CARTER: Uh-huh.

8 HENRIETTA: And so I thought that was his mother
9 and then this was his, you know. But no, that was his
10 sister.

11 CARTER: It turned out that it was a picture of him
12 with his sister.

13 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

14 CARTER: Oh, that's amazing.

15 HENRIETTA: Then he tag--shows me another woman's
16 face, he says, this is my mother. I said, what do you mean
17 this is your mother? All--always we had that picture with
18 his--him and his sister on the wall, I assumed it was his
19 mother.

20 CARTER: Uh-huh.

21 HENRIETTA: Because she was so much older, don't
22 you see?

23 CARTER: Right. Where--where did Aaron come from,
24 Aaron Greenberg. Where--where did he come from?

25 HENRIETTA: He came from Romania.

1 CARTER: From Romania?
2 HENRIETTA: Yeah.
3 CARTER: Okay.
4 HENRIETTA: Bucharest.
5 CARTER: Now your birthday is--is February 9th, is
6 it?
7 HENRIETTA: Not mine, that's--
8 CARTER: No?
9 HENRIETTA: --another sister, February 9th.
10 CARTER: Oh, okay.
11 HENRIETTA: That's my sister Stella's birthday.
12 CARTER: Is that right?
13 HENRIETTA: Yeah, mine is September the 5th.
14 9/5/10.
15 CARTER: 9/5/1910.
16 HENRIETTA: Yeah.
17 CARTER: Okay, so--
18 HENRIETTA: Stella was born in February.
19 CARTER: 1910. Okay. And Stella was born in
20 February. Oh, okay. So she was born February the 9th. Oh
21 you're right.
22 HENRIETTA: Yeah.
23 CARTER: You're right.
24 HENRIETTA: Am I right?
25 CARTER: Yeah, yeah. I had it--I was--

1 HENRIETTA: And then--
2 CARTER: --lookin' at it backwards, but--
3 HENRIETTA: Yeah.
4 CARTER: --I had your birthday down wrong, too.
5 HENRIETTA: Oh.
6 CARTER: I had yours as February--or September the
7 2nd, but it's--
8 HENRIETTA: No.
9 CARTER: --September the 5th.
10 HENRIETTA: Yeah.
11 CARTER: I have a child of my own born on that
12 date.
13 HENRIETTA: Well, whaddya know? Isn't that nice?
14 CARTER: Yep.
15 HENRIETTA: Every time you see your daughter you'll
16 think of me. [laughter]
17 CARTER: Well, okay--
18 HENRIETTA: Anyway, I thought that was a marvelous
19 story about the--the houses that they had the--the--you know,
20 mind you, all these years nobody knew about it.
21 CARTER: Yes.
22 HENRIETTA: If they'd've been discovered, they
23 would've been mutilated.
24 CARTER: Right.
25 HENRIETTA: It was solidly built. And--and not

1 until the bombing broke 'em open, you know--

2 CARTER: Mmm hmm.

3 HENRIETTA: --did they know there was anything
4 going on underneath there. Boy, I thought that was a
5 romantic story.

6 CARTER: Yes, indeed. Well that's wonderful.
7 Well, I do thank you so much for--for takin' your time when
8 it's so late. I--I--

9 HENRIETTA: That's okay. Is there anything else
10 you wanna know?

11 CARTER: Oh, I wanna to know--

12 HENRIETTA: How about the other sisters' birth
13 dates? Do you wanna know those?

14 CARTER: Well, I have some written down here. If
15 you know them, let me check them with you.

16 HENRIETTA: Yeah. Yeah.

17 CARTER: I have Esther's as November 3rd.

18 HENRIETTA: Right.

19 CARTER: And now I have her down as 1910, but that
20 can't be right, can it? Or--

21 HENRIETTA: No, hers is 1911.

22 CARTER: 1911. Okay.

23 HENRIETTA: Yeah. And the other one is 1912.

24 CARTER: And then Frances Fritzie is--is June
25 23rd--

1 HENRIETTA: 1912. Yeah.
2 CARTER: She--and--
3 HENRIETTA: And then comes Lillian. I think she
4 was 1914.
5 CARTER: That's right. June 24th?
6 HENRIETTA: Yes.
7 CARTER: Okay. And Stella--
8 HENRIETTA: 1914--
9 CARTER: --was February 9th?
10 HENRIETTA: Yeah.
11 CARTER: Now--
12 HENRIETTA: 1916, I think.
13 CARTER: That's right. Okay.
14 CARTER: And then Ralph was born--I mean Morris was
15 born 1917.
16 CARTER: All right. That's also September the 5th.
17 HENRIETTA: Yeah.
18 CARTER: He was born on your birthday?
19 HENRIETTA: No, he was born on the 2nd.
20 CARTER: He was born on the 2nd; you were born on
21 the 5th.
22 HENRIETTA: Yeah. Of 19--
23 CARTER: '17?
24 HENRIETTA: '17.
25 CARTER: Okay.

1 HENRIETTA: And then my brother Ralph was born in
2 1920.

3 CARTER: I have that as May 20--

4 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

5 CARTER: --or March 20th 1920.

6 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

7 CARTER: Okay. Now I understand that--that you
8 married Harry Palmer.

9 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

10 CARTER: On June the 8th.

11 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

12 CARTER: What year was that?

13 HENRIETTA: 1930.

14 CARTER: Okay. And--

15 HENRIETTA: The happiest day of my life.

16 CARTER: Well, I'm pleased. Now, Harry is no
17 longer living?

18 HENRIETTA: Yeah, he died of a stroke.

19 CARTER: Do you know what year, what month, and
20 day?

21 HENRIETTA: Not the year and month, all I can tell
22 you was 1980.

23 CARTER: 1980--

24 HENRIETTA: He died. Yeah.

25 CARTER: Okay.

1 HENRIETTA: Oh, he was sick for a long time.

2 CARTER: Okay. And--

3 HENRIETTA: He--he was in a nursing home.

4 CARTER: Oh, I'm sorry.

5 HENRIETTA: Yeah, because the doctor--I told--the
6 doctor had told me to put him in a nursing home. And I said,
7 I'll never--I will never let my beloved be taken care of, you
8 know, buncha nurses.

9 CARTER: Uh-huh.

10 HENRIETTA: So then finally when I'd come to visit
11 my doctor, he'd say, listen, you put him in a nursing home or
12 you'll wind up there yourself. And he was not far from
13 wrong; I've been ill ever since.

14 CARTER: Oh.

15 HENRIETTA: And I was a healthy--very healthy girl.

16 CARTER: I know that can take an awful lot out.

17 Now, Esther married Irwin Kampner, right?

18 HENRIETTA: Right.

19 CARTER: And he died last year some time.

20 HENRIETTA: Oh coupla--more than a couple of years.

21 CARTER: Oh, you think so?

22 HENRIETTA: He died before my husband.

23 CARTER: Oh, really?

24 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

25 CARTER: Oh--

1 HENRIETTA: Where'd you get that information?

2 CARTER: I just had it scribbled down here. I
3 guess I can't read it. Do you have any idea when that might
4 have been?

5 HENRIETTA: No, I don't. But you can contact his
6 daughter.

7 CARTER: Oh. Oh, do you know how to get a hold of
8 her?

9 HENRIETTA: Yeah, she lives in Milwaukee,
10 Wisconsin.

11 CARTER: All right.

12 HENRIETTA: She'd know, if you have to have that
13 information.

14 CARTER: Do you know her name?

15 HENRIETTA: Of course.

16 CARTER: I mean, do you know how I could get a hold
17 of her? I'm writing.

18 HENRIETTA: Well, let me--I'm talkin' to you in the
19 dark here, so I have to look it up. Can you hold for a
20 minute?

21 CARTER: Sure, uh-huh.

22 HENRIETTA: I don't see why that's such an
23 important fact.

24 CARTER: Oh, it probably isn't.

25 HENRIETTA: It isn't important.

1 CARTER: I just thought, well, you know, that would
2 be a cousin of Don's and--

3 HENRIETTA: Yes.

4 CARTER: --and maybe he'd want to be able to get a
5 hold of her, and I'd have his address.

6 HENRIETTA: Oh, well then that way--all right. Let
7 me look it up.

8 CARTER: Uh-huh.

9 [Background Talking without Henrietta]

10 HENRIETTA: Hello?

11 CARTER: Yes.

12 HENRIETTA: Here's her address. You want the
13 address and the phone number?

14 CARTER: Yes, and I didn't get her name yet,
15 either.

16 HENRIETTA: I know. I know you didn't.

17 CARTER: Oh, okay.

18 HENRIETTA: Oh, I just realized I haven't got the
19 phone number, but I've got the address--

20 CARTER: Oh, that'll be fine.

21 HENRIETTA: --so then you could look it up--

22 CARTER: Yeah.

23 HENRIETTA: --from that information. 9226 North
24 Pelham. Get it? P-E-L-H-A-M.

25 CARTER: I have it.

1 HENRIETTA: It's pronounced Pelham, but I try to
2 make it clear.

3 CARTER: I appreciate--

4 HENRIETTA: Parkway.

5 CARTER: Okay

6 HENRIETTA: Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217, zone
7 number. I didn't bother puttin' the phone number 'cause I
8 never would--could afford to call her in Milwaukee, you know?

9 CARTER: I understand. And what is her name?

10 HENRIETTA: What is her name?

11 CARTER: Yes.

12 HENRIETTA: Oh, Carol Can--Dubin.

13 CARTER: Carol--

14 HENRIETTA: And Dick--Richard maybe, I don't know.

15 CARTER: Okay.

16 HENRIETTA: Carol and Dick Dubin, D-U-B-I-N. It
17 might be under Richard, you know.

18 CARTER: Uh-huh. All right. I--I imagine he'll
19 put that in his book as soon as he gets that information.

20 HENRIETTA: Yeah.

21 CARTER: Okay. And I know that--I know--

22 HENRIETTA: That's Esther's daughter.

23 CARTER: Do you know--do you happen to know Abe and
24 Fran--Fritzie's anniversary date?

25 HENRIETTA: No, I--

1 CARTER: Okay.

2 HENRIETTA: I can't remember.

3 CARTER: How 'bout Stella's? Do you--

4 HENRIETTA: No, they would have to tell you that

5 themselves. Listen, I just barely remembered my own.

6 [laughing]

7 CARTER: Oh, I understand.

8 HENRIETTA: Stella might have 'em, I don't know.

9 I'm sorry--

10 CARTER: All right.

11 HENRIETTA: But you know I would help you if I

12 could. Don't you?

13 CARTER: Yes--

14 HENRIETTA: Or don't you.

15 CARTER: [laughing] Yes, I do. Okay. And Ralph

16 married Violet Klein, right?

17 HENRIETTA: That's right.

18 CARTER: And Morris married Etta Steinberg.

19 HENRIETTA: Right.

20 CARTER: And Stella married Leon Rives.

21 HENRIETTA: Right.

22 CARTER: All right. Well, we're--we're cookin'

23 now.

24 HENRIETTA: You didn't put Lillian--

25 CARTER: Lillian. Lillian married Philip Marlowe.

1 HENRIETTA: Right.

2 CARTER: Okay.

3 HENRIETTA: Good boy.

4 CARTER: [laughing]

5 HENRIETTA: Where'd you get that, from--

6 CARTER: From Abe, uh-huh.

7 HENRIETTA: Abe. Mmm hmm.

8 CARTER: Yeah, he was real, real helpful.

9 HENRIETTA: Mmm hmm.

10 CARTER: Okay.

11 HENRIETTA: But as far as Esther's wedding or--

12 yeah, I mean those are far, far into our memory, you know

13 what I mean?

14 CARTER: Yes, oh, I'm sure--

15 HENRIETTA: It isn't somethin' that's recent.

16 CARTER: I understand.

17 HENRIETTA: Fifty years ago. That's long enough

18 ago, don't you think?

19 CARTER: Yes, indeed. Okay. Well I want to thank

20 you once again for bein' so helpful in all of this.

21 HENRIETTA: I--I wanna say somethin'.

22 CARTER: Okay, please do.

23 HENRIETTA: I think you must love Donnie a whole

24 lot to go through all this for him.

25 CARTER: [laughing]

1 HENRIETTA: Of course we love him anyway, it's our
2 flesh and blood, you know what I mean?

3 CARTER: Uh-huh.

4 HENRIETTA: And they--him and his wife have always
5 been lovely to me. Always remembered my anniversary, my--you
6 know, holidays and all that.

7 CARTER: Yeah.

8 HENRIETTA: But that's because we're related.
9 You're a stranger and you're doing all this.

10 CARTER: Well, I've got to admit, you won't find
11 many as--as strange as I am. [laughing]

12 HENRIETTA: In what way?

13 CARTER: I was--you said I was a stranger, and I
14 was just making a joke, but I want you to know that--that Don
15 and I have--have a relationship which in Spanish is called
16 simpatico.

17 HENRIETTA: Yes.

18 CARTER: And--

19 HENRIETTA: How did you know the Spanish?

20 CARTER: Well, I hate to tell you this but I
21 learned it in school. [laughing]

22 HENRIETTA: Well you said it right.

23 CARTER: Yes. Well, I love the language, and--and
24 so whenever I get a chance, I always attempt to use my
25 Spanish, but usually the Mexicans--

1 HENRIETTA: Oh my goodness, why didn't you tell me,
2 I would've talked Spanish to you?

3 CARTER: [speaking Spanish] en Espanol un pocito.

4 HENRIETTA: Oh. Jo hablo mui bien.

5 CARTER: Oh, si.

6 HENRIETTA: Pero no tengo [speaking Spanish] you
7 know, anybody to talk to--

8 CARTER: Si--

9 HENRIETTA: --you see, my--my tongue slipped a
10 little.

11 CARTER: [laughing] Well, your accent is much
12 better than mine, I must say.

13 HENRIETTA: You--as far as I heard you, it was
14 perfect. Simpatico is a word.

15 CARTER: [laughing] Well then, you understand.
16 Don and I have--are like soul-brothers.

17 HENRIETTA: Yes. Yes.

18 CARTER: We seem to have many things in common.
19 And I really enjoy him.

20 HENRIETTA: Well anybody that loves Donnie, I love
21 them, too.

22 CARTER: Well--

23 HENRIETTA: And I would love to meet you. If you
24 ever come to de--to Michigan, you've got my phone number.

25 CARTER: I shall look you up.

1 HENRIETTA: And--yes. And listen to this. Oh god.
2 You know, when you get old, your mind travels backwards. I
3 was going to say somethin'. Ah--oh, I gotta tell you
4 somethin' naughty. You wanna hear it?

5 CARTER: I'd love to.

6 HENRIETTA: When I went to high school, I figured
7 they don't know I know Spanish. I'm gonna take Spanish and
8 I'll get good marks, and I'll get, you know, praise for it.
9 I didn't tell the teacher I already knew Spanish. You had a
10 choice of taking French or Spanish. So I says I'll take
11 Spanish and I'll get good grades in it. But I would have
12 learned a new language.

13 CARTER: And you--

14 HENRIETTA: I think I was dumb, don't you?

15 CARTER: [laughing]

16 HENRIETTA: But the teacher says, it's remarkable
17 how well you speak, how well you picked it up. Oy, she never
18 know I knew it before.

19 CARTER: And she took all the credit for it, too,
20 didn't she?

21 HENRIETTA: Oh, of course. I got all A's in it,
22 you know what I mean?

23 CARTER: Yes, indeed. Oh, that's won--

24 HENRIETTA: But oh, I feel so bad. I says, at
25 least I would've learned a new language: French.

1 CARTER: [laughing]

2 HENRIETTA: Okay.

3 CARTER: Well--

4 HENRIETTA: Any time you need any more information,
5 just call on me. I'll would be happy to oblige, as you can
6 see.

7 CARTER: Yes, indeed. Well I do--

8 HENRIETTA: I'm glad I was home. You know, I was
9 downstairs talkin' to the ladies downstairs, and I just don't
10 know what made me come upstairs. They're still down there.

11 CARTER: I'm glad you did.

12 HENRIETTA: Isn't that something?

13 CARTER: Yes, indeed.

14 HENRIETTA: You wouldn't have found me.

15 CARTER: [laughing]

16 HENRIETTA: Okay.

17 CARTER: Thank you again.

18 HENRIETTA: And what is your name?

19 CARTER: I'm Carter Johnston.

20 HENRIETTA: Carter Johnston? That's a good ole
21 Southern name.

22 CARTER: Wait 'til you hear the whole name, it's
23 Carter French Johnston.

24 HENRIETTA: You're kidding.

25 CARTER: There you go.

1 HENRIETTA: Just what I was talkin' about; French.
2 CARTER: That's right.
3 HENRIETTA: And I bet you talk French.
4 CARTER: I don't speak a word of French.
5 HENRIETTA: Oh--
6 CARTER: Merci beaucoup. That's--that's it.
7 HENRIETTA: Yeah, well, we all know that.
8 CARTER: [laughing]
9 HENRIETTA: Well, how did you learn Spanish--oh,
10 in--in high school?
11 CARTER: Uh-huh, in high school.
12 HENRIETTA: I see, well you must've gotten good
13 grades 'cause you--your--your inflex is perfect, you know.
14 CARTER: Oh, well that's very nice of you. I
15 appreciate that.
16 HENRIETTA: Okay.
17 CARTER: Well, it's been--
18 HENRIETTA: Okay.
19 CARTER: --wonderful talking to you.
20 HENRIETTA: Thank you.
21 CARTER: Thank you.
22 HENRIETTA: Bye-bye.
23 CARTER: Good night.
24
25