

Tape made on July 11, 1978 - Katherine Farhat - Durango, Colorado

George he ran away from the farm his father owned. When he ran away they looked to find him and at my mother and father's house. They start to know that he wanted to work in the day and came up at night and stayed with my family. Then when George find out they are coming all the time to find him, so George put himself in the British Army. The Army you know they pay for the trips and for everything. He went in the Army and Germany and he got in prison but he say that he make him work so much.

In Palestine, they make him trim the trees and all that. They have a big farm you know and to do the work with the trees and the orchard. They kept him busy around the garden and around the trees. He used to go to my mother and father and make the money for himself and relax. He find out that they will follow him there, his father's family, follow him there. I think that he realized if he stayed with them he would make trouble for them. George is very sensitive, really, so he put himself in the Army. George used to go to work for people in the daytime to make money to spend on himself, but he stay with my family to night. There they are too mean with their children. If they want them to do something, they have to do it, you have to you know. That's what I understood.

Before I came from Palestine in 1933 I took Freddy and I came down to pick you up. I can't pick you up, she, (probably Suleiman's sister Hilwah), threw me on the floor. That busman, the taxi, he was sure surprised. He says, "What kind of people they are? They don't have any heart? They don't have them, you know, to do that". I didn't have a chance to do anything. I went two or three times for you. The first time I didn't get you. The second time she threw me on the floor and picked you up and took you from me. She wanted to fight but I am not used to fighting with anybody. He (Suleiman's father) came down the next day, he came down to tell them that Freddy was his son's child and to give us the paper to say that he has to take care of his own son's children. He says he want them to come down and pick Freddy up. Then Elias's father told them that we don't know anything. Once you come you are going to have to talk to them but for us we don't have nothing to do with it. That was the day she hit me and threw me on the floor. When I see that I don't want to wait anymore. So I went to the (American) Consul to get my passport and signature to come home and everything so I can get out. I can't buy the ticket until I am sure when I am going. Then, I went down to get the ticket and they told me which train I am going to have to take from Bethlehem to Egypt. Then from Egypt I have to go to Cherbourg, France because I don't have the time to wait for the boat that leaves more closer to us because I have to run right away before I have trouble. Because they say if they get the paper they could take the children away from me. You know they are not like it is here, that the mother is responsible for the children. No, there the man is responsible for the children. So then I left early in the morning, 6 o'clock in the morning. I don't know for sure when he came but it was about 8 o'clock when he (Jireyes) came with the policeman to take Freddy away from me. When they find out I wasn't there, they say where did she go? Where could she have gone? They say they don't know. They didn't tell them where I went. She says that she thought you would come and bother us here. She took the children and went. She didn't tell us where she went. The way I took the train, it was a little bit different from where they take the boat and all that. They were trying to give me a pill to calm me down but I told them that I didn't need anything like that. Then Elias's father (my brother in law) and others told me to take some Arak (licorice Arabic alcoholic drink) for seasickness but I told them that I didn't need anything like that. I don't drink that stuff and they say oh no you have to take that. I took it and they said oh good, good and they left. When we got to Beirut, they saw the Arak (the Arabic Drink) and they said it was illegal. They took it away from me and I said oh goody, goody. They probably drank it themselves.

Anyway I took the other train to Egypt and the boat to Cherbourg, France. When I get to Cherbourg I find a young girl. She was going to New York. She have some friends or something there. She was with me all the way on the boat. You know, we have a nice time with her. She talked like she was English. She talked a little the English a little bit different than we do but I understood her. We have a nice time and she helped me with Freddy. She tells him to go here and to go there, everything you to tell him, he does it. He was all right. That's the way it goes.

My mother and father, they went to Russia and they have a little child. So, they thought that's too much trouble and they put me in a Catholic School. I go from the bedroom to eat and then when I eat, I go to the yard. They have a big yard; I don't know how many acres. They plant all kinds of trees. Sometimes the people come to work around there. I would be around there. One time I was going down and the teacher, the nun was spanking the girl and she was crying. The poor people they don't pay any money and if they tell them something they have to do it. But, with us I never had that problem before but she was spanking her. I went down to tell Jamila. Jamila and Na'me used to go to school classes, but the only classes they took me to were at the church. We go to the church early in the morning and before we go to bed. They have to take you to church.

Once I was playing with the other girls around me you know. With a girl, they have to pay money for their kids and they are treated like we were. They treated us very nice. I don't have any scolding or nothing. I used to pass and the Nun was playing the piano, and she says come on, come on and I sat down. Where you learn that playing, you play very nice and if you study a little you will play very nice. I was 4 or 5; I was very young. When I was six I went to Russia. They won't take me to school either. I have to wait about a year, when you start you are about 6 or 7. That's why I say I didn't finish the grade school. I had one more grade to finish grammar school. I didn't have a chance. Well anyway that's the way it go.

I was playing with another girl and I want to go to the bathroom. No that's what made my father to take us home. Well, I want to go to the bathroom. They had a leak that let the rain down to the bedroom. It's a bad place there in the corner. Somebody thought they saw me and thought they had seen me go to the bathroom where they should not have gone. I know that she went to tell the Nun over the place. So I want to hide myself. The girl went with me; she was frightened; we were walking yeah and we went to hide ourselves. They went to look and look, all over the place for her and me but nobody there. They went to my Uncle Ibrahim, no and they went to my Uncle Jacob, no. They went to my grandmother and grandfather, no and they don't find me. They started to worry, what's happened to that girl because they are responsible for me. So they don't know what to do. Well I stay there and it's getting dark and then I don't come out. I stay there and then I came out. You think they feed me, no. Then I go to bed and somebody feed me a little piece of bread or something. I was hungry then. My Uncle Yacube, when he when he went to find out where they look for me, and what was that? He wrote a letter to my father, why you throw your kids in that place? It's dark; they make them suffer like that. When my father find out about that, he comes. He have a business in Russia too, you know. He was going back to Russia and when he understood what happened, he take us back to Russia. He took us from the church. He bought the tickets and took us to the Russia.

Frankly at the church, when the people pay them money they treat them very nice. The place where the nuns are they wanted the people that paid to keep them there. They didn't want the people that didn't pay. The people pay for all of the care that they were given and they treated them very nice. The other people had to do the laundry and housekeeping for everyone else. When she hear that, I think she told me and we went to hide. We went to hide, it's a place you go up on top and then a open hall where you have to go in; where they have a big bell. I don't know why they have that place but anyway they didn't find me. They worry

after we got up there, we couldn't sleep there. So I went to sleep in my own bed. The Nun started to scolding me but spanking me, no. The people there tried not to do anything unless they had to do it, as far as finding us was concerned.

When I got married the first time it was a very wonderful wedding, like Arabic wedding. Many Arabic people were there. Many of his uncles, aunts, cousins, were going back home to the old country, but because of the wedding they decided to stay. It was good they did because there was trouble in the old country. The war was in our country and spreading everywhere. I got married in August. I think, in 1914 because Julia was born in 1915. **They were a good family. All the Arabs, his relatives, were very well known over there. They had a lot of parties and social events. They were all gathered together in a big diwan (living room), and they all stared at me and asked who I was. His picture was there. I asked what happened and then they told me that there had been an accident. They showed me a picture of the accident.** To tell you the truth, it's hard to understand how he could get killed in the accident and he passed away in the accident. It's like a dream really to tell you the truth. **On the train, the rich people were seated in first class and the poor were in the back. They thought they were very rich and they have so many things. (Implying that the passengers were robbed after the collision). He was traveling with Mitri on a business trip. Mitri said he wanted to get off the train to get a cup of coffee. He said go ahead and I'll stay on the train. Mitri was Jamil's brother, married to Isabel. They fought a lot, even hitting one another and then they were OK. Her sister (Isabel's sister), was in love with Jamil's youngest brother (who?), and wanted to marry him but my mother-in-law didn't like the idea. She always followed him around and all of her in laws asked her why she wanted to marry into such a crazy family. But she continued to follow him and come to the house to see Isabel but really to see the brother. They did get married. I think she was killed in a car accident, but I am not sure because I was gone by then. I don't know if they had children, but if they had children, the children would have been crazy too. God rest her soul, nobody could escape her craziness. But with me, she didn't fight. Mitri left Isabel and married somebody else. Mitri had twins with Isabel, but when he remarried, he had more children, I am not sure how many.**

When we were in Mexico we ate frijoles. Mexican people eat it every day. We used to put it on the fire early in the morning; by lunchtime they fix it. They will have it at lunch and at supper and what was leftover they have for breakfast in the morning. The men if they don't have frijoles, they don't work. They eat eggs; they eat everything. Mexican people used to be very poor people. They work but they don't care what you feed them to eat. Syrian people they used to act good with the Mexican. Lots of time we have mashie. We take the inside of the squash out and we don't cook it. We give it to the servant girl, she takes it home to her mother. "She says that funny, you eat the skin and we eat the inside of it. Why are you wasting that for?" Now we fix the stuffing with it.

The food that is left over, we don't keep. They throw it away or give it to the help. They have to take it home. The servant girl takes it to her mother. The Mexican people are not very careful what they eat. Everything tastes good for them. I think because they don't have enough money to spend for what they need. Every night when they go home they take whatever we have left over. Usually for lunch we have one thing and for supper we have something else. We broil a little meat; cook some vegetables. Usually for supper we don't have too much. Usually the best meal is for lunch.

Na'me worked hard all her life. I feel sorry for her the way she works. Her family still lives in the same house as my parents. She got the best education; she even went to college. She works hard and suffers lots. Her husband was not making much money and they have to support them. She goes to my mother and father; she never tells them that I am hungry. He

used to work on the farm as kind of a caretaker and he did not make much money. Somebody kills somebody and they blame him for it. They were afraid they would kill him. He starts to working in the house making those pictures, those things with shells and stuff, you know. (Mother of Pearl handicrafts) That stuff he used to make to wear here and there. People used to order for him to make it but it takes time to do it and he didn't make money. But they are all ok. Elias is doing very well.

Na'me have the 3 boys and 2 girls. They are all married; nobody is around the house anymore. Her husband passed away, when she came down here he was dead already. She wrote us a letter here a long time before Elias came. Elias used to like to come down. He used to work in the factory and to make pants and suits and all that. When he came to California he work like that. They hire him and everyplace they hire him he works, he did pretty well all right. Then he met that Handel family. (Florence Handal) They get married. They met for each other. She likes him and he likes her and they are very happy. Elias is easy to get along with. Fred when he was living here, he and Elias used to go play tennis. Then Fred moved way up there. Elias asks about Fred. You know when he talks to me he asks how is Fred, he asks about George and he asks about everybody, to know how they are doing. Elias has a good heart. He always send them (his brothers) money; they make it but not enough.

When I was a little girl in Russia we went ice-skating almost every Sunday. They have a big place for skating. When you are skating, if the person don't know how to skate they have a chair with wheels about this high for them to set on. Then they would skate behind the chair to support them. This way they would learn how to skate. Then in a little while they would go without the chair. I did all right in a little while.

Did you do any knitting or sewing when you were young asks Mary? No I didn't when I was a little girl. How did I learn how to crochet and knit? When I was in Mexico I used to have a slip or nightgown that had crochet all around, and here someone was doing it. So I started with it. I didn't do much at first. The family would set and talk all the time. I didn't do anything or work but when I came down here.