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## Community voices – transcript – OH 299/1

**Myer Solomon**

1995

Interviewer: Philip Satchell

Radio 5AN: Radio programs about South Australian families

*Extract of an Oral History where he details his father's experiences upon arriving in Australia prior to 1890 after fleeing the Russian-Polish border and the European instinct for business.*

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My father, Nathan Solomon, left the Russian Polish border at a place called Marijampole for possibly the good reason that he didn't want to get his head lopped off.

### **What year was that? When did he leave there?**

He would have left there round about 1885, and he arrived in Adelaide sometime just before 1890. When he arrived he started off with a horse and cart, taking very, very heavy parcels of manchester, drapery, etcetera, which he would go to all the suburbs, including Port Adelaide and Outer Harbor.

### **He was a hawker?**

Yes.

### **Isn't it interesting how these Europeans came here with this instinct for business, that they could get straight into it?**

That was for sure, and the way that they worked as well. Because going a little bit further, when Nathan had other people working with him and had quite a sizeable home - which is now the Anaster Hospital on Glen Osmond Road - that the stables were behind the old home and that there he kept ten, twelve horses and also had ten, twelve different types of carts. He and his men, and the stable hand, started work, getting the horses ready at 4am. And quite often in winter, when they would finish up coming back along the old Torrens Road from Port Adelaide, Outer Harbor, sometimes when it was pouring with rain the wheel would go down to the axle. They'd have to get out in the rain, take all the heavy samples, and then get going again and quite often they wouldn't arrive back till round about midnight. All of the people who worked with my father, all of them lived well into their eighties, some into their nineties, which goes to show that hard work never hurt anybody.