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GEORGE JAMES DAOPOULUS

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LEVINE: Okay. Today is August 1st, 1998. And I'm here on Cape Cod and in West Yarmouth, Massachusetts with George Daopoulos. And Mr. Daopoulos came from Greece in 1929 when he was nine years of age. And today, Mr. Daopoulos is 78 years of age. And his daughter, Martha, and son-in-law, George, are also here for the interview. Okay, well, I'm looking forward to this. Now—

DAOPOULOS: I am too.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Good. Okay, why don't you tell the na—your name that you were born with in Greece.

DAOPOULOS: Name? Fine. My name, when I was baptized in Greek, I was named—I was named Yorius [PH] after my grandfather. But the only thing is that what they normally do in Greece is they always name the first son after the grandfather. That's how I got my name, Yory [PH], because my father's name was Yorius.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And the rest of your name?

DAOPOULOS: The—my—my—and then we—I get—I usually use my—my father's name was Demetrius [PH], who was—was named Demetrius. And Daopoulos, actually—what—what that means, I—I just don't know. I never inquired from my parents just what Daopoulos stands for.

LEVINE: Okay. And tell the—tell your birth date and where in Greece you were born.

DAOPOULOS: I was born February 18th in 1920 in a little—in a little village by the name of Surpey [PH], which is about 150 kilometers north of—north of Athens, very picturesque. It's set in—in—as you know, Greece is all mountainous, mostly mountains. There isn't very many plains. But this is a very nice, richy town. They have—the town is in a valley. The—over the mountain. You go over the big mountain and you get to the shore, which is—I forgot the name of the—the sea. But it's very near—very near Volos, which is the big city in—I think it's the third—third or fourth largest city in—in Greece. It's a very prosperous little—little village. I've been back quite a few times. It—it raises tobacco. It has—which we probably shouldn't be talking about, happy today with tobacco. But it has cotton. It has olives. It—it's quite a—it's kind of a prosperous village. And I find that I don't—I don't find many—many immigrants from Greece that come from my village. Now, you get certain other parts where their—where they're not prosperous. They're the ones that come—come in vil—come—become—come to the—come to the States. But I find very few—none of my relatives have—have—have come to—have come to America because—not that they are rich. But they—they do well as far as their financials and—

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, you mentioned that—that, actually, you came to America when you were three years old—

DAOPOULOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —as well. Tell me what you know about that, even though you—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: —can't remember [unclear].

DAOPOULOS: Well, what happened then—what happened then was—because I was born in Greece. And when I was around two years old, I had a problem with my leg. I could—I couldn't stand on it. So my folks got a doctor and they says, "Well, we don't know what it is." So

they sent me to Athens, to the doctors in Athens to hospital there. There they could not find exactly what the problem was, and they suggested that my folks bring me to Boston to the Children's Hospital in Boston to be examined—to be examined in Boston. And, because my mother—my mother was ra—she wa—she grew up in America, even though she was a—she was born in Greece. She—she grew up in America so she was very fluent in her language. She was very—very good in speaking. She went to school here as a teenager. So there was no problem. We—we came to Boston and they brought me to—that was when I was three years old. They brought—they brought me to Boston to the Children's Hospital. There they operated on me. They took some cartridge or something from my knee and they told—they told my mother if it was—and they injected it into a guinea pig. And they said, "If it's—if the guinea pig dies in a week, that means he's got TB or cancer on the—on the—on the bone, on the knee. Well, as it was, it didn't—it wasn't that. It wasn't that. And—but my leg, in the meantime, was—got a little thinner so I had to wa—they—they put me on a brace and I was walking, oh, for about three—three or four years in a brace. And then, little by little, it came back to me. The—I was able to get rid of the—the brace. Then we—when I was six years old, we went back to Greece. My mother got sick and she had a slight case of tuberculosis, which is how we got into Ellis Island later. We—we went back to Greece when I was six. And we stayed there for six—three years. And that's how I came—and then we just—when she was better, we came back in 1929, in June.

LEVINE: Wow. So you stayed in—in Boston three years?

DAOPOULOS: Yep, three years.

LEVINE: Because of your leg?

DAOPOULOS: I stayed in—well, we stayed in Marlborough, which is my—which was the—the home city. We stayed there. I went to school till I was one year old—six years old. That made me one year old. And I went back to Greece and I went to Greek school to the fourth grade. And we came back in 19—1929. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what was wrong with your leg?

DAOPOULOS: Please?

LEVINE: What was wrong with your leg?

DAOPOULOS: Well, never found out. They—you know, what doctors finally said, I had arthritis, an arthritic knee. I mean, I went through high school. I played football. I played basketball. I played all kinds of sports and—but it—it was a little smaller and the knee—the legs weren't the same. There was a little—but then—

LEVINE: It didn't—it didn't bother your ability to—

DAOPOULOS: No, no, no.

LEVINE: Right.

DAOPOULOS: I played—and then what finally happened, you know, the '40—1941, when the service—when the war started, they—they fou—I think that's where they finally found—it came down that I had arthritis.

LEVINE: Oh.

DAOPOULOS: Arthritis and—and I was one of the low numbers picked for—for the draft and I—and when I got examined, they—they had me down as 4F because that's—but then about a year later, they reexamined me. And by that time, I guess, like everybody, we're all—we're all ready to go into the service. So I went—they called me back for reexamination and they put me 1A and I went back into—I went into the service and served one year. Yeah. And that's—and, you know, it's been giving me trouble. My knee's been trouble since. So—but we just take aspirins and just try to go—get through with it. Uh-hmm, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Wha—could you say anything about why was it that your mother had been in this country? H—could you say something about your family and how come your mother was here even earlier?

DAOPOULOS: Well, yeah. She—what her—her older brothers—one of the older brothers first came to America and settled in Marlborough and, little by little, he started bringing his other sisters. And that's how—that's how my mother got—got—came over as a teenager. And she—you know, I think she worked in the factories in Marlborough in the shoe factories, which Marlborough was noted for the shoe factories. And that's how she—she got here. And then—and then I think she got—she went back to Greece to get married.

LEVINE: Did she know who she was going to marry?

DAOPOULOS: She—she knew—please?

LEVINE: Did she know who she was going to marry when she went back?

DAOPOULOS: No, no. She didn't. She did know she was going to get married but the family knew they were going to bring her to Greece to get married, like a—like these proxies, you know. And I think—I think that's what it was when—when she got back. But I don't think my mother knew when—because she was just a little teenage—she was about 16 years old too, I guess. But at that time, they—probably, they all that idea. If—if you're going back to Greece, it must be for some reason. And—and then, like I say, to get married and I guess—I guess the plans were to stay there until I had my problem with my—with my leg.

LEVINE: I see.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, and then that was—that—that's the situation. Probably, if my leg didn't bother me, I probably would have never come to America. Probably, I would have—we would have been there.

LEVINE: Huh.

DAOPOULOS: Probably served in the Second World War in the—in the Greek Army, but very—very happy things turned out this way, and come back to the States. Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Now, what was your mother's name and her maiden name?

DAOPOULOS: Her name—her name was—in Greek, it was Triandafia [PH] Scouras.

LEVINE: Okay.

DAOPOULOS: Triandafia Scouras.

LEVINE: Maybe if you would spell them? Can you spell both of them?

DAOPOULOS: Could I—do you have to have a—a Greek—in English, it was Rose.

LEVINE: Okay. [chuckles]

DAOPOULOS: That's a little bit easier. Rose—Rose Scouras—S-C-O-U-R-A-S.

LEVINE: Okay.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And your father's name?

DAOPOULOS: Demetrius.

LEVINE: Right.

DAOPOULOS: Demetrius Daopoulos.

LEVINE: Okay, and do you know, was that an arranged marriage? Do you know if their families arranged their marriage?

DAOPOULOS: I think it was. I—I—I think it was because there was a little diff—difference in their age, maybe a little—10—maybe 10 to 14 years difference, I think. I never—I never knew my father's age. But—but it was quite a difference. He came to America and he was here 40—40-odd years. And would you believe, he never—he never learned to speak English, because he—his—his theory was, "You're going to stay here like all—stay here, make enough money, go back to Greece to settle," which we never did. We—we stayed here. Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow. And how about grandparents? Did you have grandparents—

DAOPOULOS: Ah—

LEVINE: —that you can remember?

DAOPOULOS: The only—well, when I was there, the only grandparent—I can remember very vaguely my—my father's mother—my father's mother and father, very—you know, as I was young, they looked very old. I don't know how old they were. But they looked very old and my mother's—and my mother's mother was alive. And I—you know, I spoke with her. But very, very old people. They seemed, like I say, very old. They were just—they [unclear]—I don't know if you ever saw Greek—I mean, you could see them in every day's paper today with black, with the handkerchief over their hat. That's—that's the way I remember them, very old.

LEVINE: Do you remember any experiences when you were with them?

DAOPOULOS: The only experience I remember was my grandfather that died. I could—things—things like that, I think a youngster would remember. My—my grandfather died and what they do is they keep them—they had him in—what I remember, they had him in

the—in the casket, just a plain box. And out—and what they do there, they take the cover, the whole cover of the—of the casket and they put it—like, we used to put flowers outside of a—a hole that somebody died. They used to put the top of the casket right up against the—the door of the house, so people in the village, they knew when they seen the casket, there's a death in there. I can remember—I can remember that because sc—really a little scared. They show—showed me my grandfather. I don't know whether they—they don't embalm them, which, by the way—and very weird looking when they die, you know. They had his hands tied. They had a—they had a, like, a handkerchief across his—so he wouldn't move. Very scary things, in which I think I always—every time I used to go by the cemetery, because you had to go by the cemetery, always used to be—make sure I was on the other side of the street, not—not on the—not on the—[chuckles] not on the street side. On the cemetery side. And the cemeteries there are awful, anyways. They just—because a few years back we went to see—because my father, in the meantime, had died in Greece on one of his trips there.

LEVINE: What are the cemeteries like? How are they dif—

DAOPOULOS: Well, in the city—in the v—in the villages, very—nobody takes care of them. So in other words, bushes—

LEVINE: [unclear].

DAOPOULOS: What they—the people that have a little money, that have a little influence are buried right in the front of the church. I mean, right in front of the cemetery and all the—the rest of them are in the back. And whatever—whatever is done is right in the front. And what they do is, after a certain amount of years, they dig them up. They dig up the—the casket and they take the remains, the bones. And they—I don't know, silicone them or whatever they—they put some kind of a stuff and they put them in a box and keep them out—up—outside the grave. In other words, not in the ground, and they bury—bury another part of the family in the same—in the same grave, the family.

LEVINE: And the bones just stay out in the air?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, they take the bones up and they put them in—and they put them in the little—like a container.

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: And they put it right there, yeah. But I remember when he died—my father died, we—we—and my—my mother was there, I had to go back, which was a long—I mean, he was 19—must have been '60s—in the '60s. And we told them. We just—“In America, we don't dig them up. We leave them there. Please—please don't—don't dig him up.” Left him there. My mother made a nice marble—all marble gravestone. And it was just as though we told them, “Take him out.” You know. Once we've g—once we've gone—once we've gone, we don't have any control. What—they do whatever, which they did. They dug him out and they buried his sister afterwards. And later on in years, when we went back to him—back to Greece, you know, I saw the—the box where his remains were. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, what do they do? Add a name to a headstone each time they dig somebody up and put somebody else in?

DAOPOULOS: No, they leave some—the ones that have a little money can do that. Others that just have a wooden cross—

LEVINE: I see.

DAOPOULOS: —just rotten. Some of them even—some of them even—the graves just—the, you know, wooden boxes, no—they just keep it in the—but you get into the cities, you know, it's altogether different. You know.

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: They—they—they have some cemeteries as—you know, as nice ours. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Is there anything else about the de—you said they put the top of the casket outside the door.

DAOPOULOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Then did people come in to—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, they come in. They—[chuckles] mostly, they come in—you know, all my—because they bury them the next day. They don't—there, they come in. The people come in and the relatives. And believe me, it's always—they always have, what's the word? Wailing, crying, you know. People come in. You stay still. Then all of a sudden, somebody screams. You know, all that. Oh, gee. Well, I—like I say, I don't remember that but my mother was telling

me about it when—when my father died when I went there. She says—says, “We sit there and then all of a sudden, somebody screamed, you know. ‘Ahhhh!’” You know, like the Indians—

LEVINE: [unclear].

DAOPOULOS: They—they—

LEVINE: Huh.

DAOPOULOS: —still do that today. It’s still one of the—one of the customs that they do that.

LEVINE: Interesting.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, how about food?

DAOPOULOS: F—food?

LEVINE: Was there food involved with—with the [unclear]?

DAOPOULOS: The food?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

DAOPOULOS: Food—it—now, like I said, in the little—it—the—my village?

LEVINE: Well, first of all, just around a funeral.

DAOPOULOS: Hmm.

LEVINE: Is there food involved when these people come in to view the body—

DAOPOULOS: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: —at the funeral?

DAOPOULOS: Oh, th—they—gee—gee, I don’t remember. Like, here, we do have, you know, afterwards. But I don—I just don’t remember.

LEVINE: No.

DAOPOULOS: I don’t remember that.

LEVINE: But how—okay, how about food in general?

DAOPOULOS: They—oh, yeah.

LEVINE: In the village there?

DAOPOULOS: Fine, the village. They—they—they have food. They—mostly—mostly what they grow. Mostly what they grow. Yeah.

LEVINE: And were you a religious family?

DAOPOULOS: Yes. Oh, yeah. Yeah, I was—I was baptized. As it was—as it was, my mother—especially, my mother was very religious. Very religious. The—between my father and—and my mother, they went quite a few—they used to go every year to Greece. This was back when, Martha? In the '50s and '60s, they would go and every—almost every year to Greece. My mother always used to—I think there was one church. There were two churches. There were two churches in the village of Surpey [PH], one old one, and then they built the—a bigger cathedral. Now, the old one was—was a church for St. George. Well, the other one was St. Boskevie [PH]. Well, my mother was always doing as much as she could, because they closed the—they closed the old church, espe—they would have special services on his—on the feast day or something. And everything was going on. The other church was more in the center of the vill—of the village where all the stores were and everything. But my mother used to spend a lot of—sent a lot of money to the small church, because it was—I think it's because maybe she got married—married there. And I was baptized there, and always sending money. "Fix this. Fix that." And, you know, the—the Council would just—just wasn't just taking care of it. But she was very religious. She—every time she'd go to, you know, Greece, she'd go to one—couple of the islands where they have big celebrations of Holy Days. Yeah, my father, you know, was not so much. But I think—I think I took after my mother. I took af—I took after my mother. I—when I go to Greece, I—I do make—what's the word?

LEVINE: Pilgrimage?

DAOPOULOS: Pilgrimages to—to one island, who I have very much faith in, one of the late saints. I think the saint was—was 1920 in one of the islands right off of Athens. He's got—he's got his—his—the church, the house where he was born, he did all his work. It's still—it's still—and p—you know, it's one of the tours of—when you go to

Athens. And I think a lot of Greeks from Greece—from all over Greece go there. And they visit—they visit the island and—and hope for miracles, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, for healing—

DAOPOULOS: Hope for—you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: The healing and all those—yes. Yeah.

LEVINE: What is the name of the island?

DAOPOULOS: A—Agena. [PH] Agena. It's only about a—about an hour—not even a hour—no, with—you went with the hydroplane.

MARTHA: Yeah, a half-hour.

DAOPOULOS: Half-hour. The other one, when we used to go was—take about an hour.

LEVINE: And what's the name of the saint?

DAOPOULOS: Saint Nictarios [PH]. It's a—like I say, it's a—the—as it is, there's—they just built a church in Coh—outside of Rosendale outside of Boston, the low—I think it's one of the newest churches in Massachusetts. It's—it's—they took the name from St. Nictarios [unclear].

LEVINE: And it's a Greek Orthodox Church.

DAOPOULOS: Greek Orthodox Church, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Is there anything about the Holy Days and—and the celebration of them in Greece—

DAOPOULOS: Oh!

LEVINE: —that you can recall?

DAOPOULOS: Well, I—the only th—I can't recall, because I was a youngster. But I recall when—when, you know, one of my later visits. In one of my later visits to Greece, they—we—first, my—I think one of my first trips back was we went Easter time, on Easter. You know, all week. They prepare for Easter all week, cooking, church every

night late. And then on Easter day, where—where—in the village where I was born in Surpey with my—with my wife, no matter—you walk—anywhere you walk in the little village, every house has—outside, they're all barbecuing lambs. Every—every house—whatever. There's 400 homes. They—everybody's outside cooking two, three lambs. And you go by—you know, they know you. They cut—they cut a piece of the lamb off. They give you wine. And—but I'll tell you—but I still prefer—as nice as it is, I still prefer the way we celebrate it here in—in the States.

LEVINE: Really?

DAOPOULOS: I do.

LEVINE: W—why is that?

DAOPOULOS: I don't know. I don't know. We—I—I like—well, probably because I didn't have my family with me.

LEVINE: Oh.

DAOPOULOS: You know. That's probably why. Here, you have a family. You go to church at nighttime. You come back. Next morning—we don't barbecue. We—you know, we put—we put the—

LEVINE: Yeah.

DAOPOULOS: —leg of lamb in the oven. And we sit down. Everything's—but I suppose—I suppose, for them, it's—it's really nice. And they—and they do. And then the other big holiday is—is now. They—starting today, August 1st to August 15th is 15 big holiest days in—it's—what—what is it, Martha? The 15th?

MARTHA: It's preparation of the Virgin Mary.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. So—

MARTHA: It's the holy day of Mary.

DAOPOULOS: So what they do—what—what happens is—at this time [unclear] is the people from Athens, all the big cities, they all go back to their villages just to have festivals for the August 15th. August 15th is the—they—they celebrate by going to church. And afterwards, it's a festival. It's a festival. Drinking, dancing, whatever you want for the whole day. Every—every—every village—probably every village, even, it must be done in the cities too, but everywhere you

go in Greece, this is the big holy day. And that's all they do is celebrate the—the—the holy day, you know.

LEVINE: So do you recall any of that from when you were a little boy?

DAOPOULOS: No, don't.

LEVINE: No.

DAOPOULOS: I—

LEVINE: And—and what happens for the two weeks before the—the—the 15th? What—what do people do?

DAOPOULOS: They go to church. Every night is church. Every night is church. Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Well, now, [clears throat]. Let's see. So you went back from Marlborough when you were six years old.

DAOPOULOS: Right.

LEVINE: And do you recall anything of your time in—in the States? Those three years when you—

DAOPOULOS: Ve—

LEVINE: —first came here?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. Yeah, I—we—I grew—I grew up with a—in Marlborough, like I said. Well, the first thing I remember, I was—I remember I went—I was going to school. I finally—

LEVINE: You had one year of school.

DAOPOULOS: I had first year of school. Right. And we're going to school. I had a good friend of mine and the two of us used to go to school every day late. We never used to go to school. We never used to go to school on time because we'd always played on the way. And I always remember this because it's something—you know, and it was 1926. We didn't have—we didn't have what you call money then either. And—and we used to play a game on the way to

school. And this is why we used to do it. We used to have, like, alleys [PH]. We used to go try to hit an alley, you know. You—you throw out the alley. Then the other one would go. If you miss it, yours—just try to follow the alley along to go to—

LEVINE: What's an alley?

DAOPOULOS: An al—what—marbles.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: The—what do they call them now?

MARTHA: Marbles.

DAOPOULOS: Marbles, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: But—but, you know, big ones with the shiny—and that's what we used to do. Sometimes the thing would bounce this way. So instead of going that away to school, we'd go—we'd go that away.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Follow the alley—

DAOPOULOS: And many—

LEVINE: [unclear].

DAOPOULOS: And—yeah. And many—I—you know, I can remember this. Many a day—many a day, the—the truant officer—the truant officer would come and pick us up. He had a motorcycle because they didn't have cars. So they used to run around with the—with their motorcycles. So they'd come in, pick us up, put both of us in their motorcycle, bring us to school. And, you know, and nothing, and other days, we'd walk in. In other days, we'd walk and we thought we're—we thought we—we're on time. We didn't know that school started. But I—I can remember that very—that's about the biggest—the biggest thing I can remember at that—at th—at that period. Yeah.

LEVINE: How was your English at that point?

DAOPOULOS: Ah, oh. Now, let me tell you something. We'll get back to bilingual—my thing. When we—when I came here, three years old, I didn't speak English. I—I—all I knew was Greek. We spent here

three years, from three to six. I—I forgot all my Greek. I—when we went back to—when I went back to Greece in 1926, I couldn't speak Greek.

LEVINE: But now, wasn't your—weren't your mother and father speaking Greek?

DAOPOULOS: My—English.

LEVINE: Oh, they were speaking English?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, father—my mother spoke to me—my mother spoke to me in English. My father would speak to me in Greek. I—and like I say, I went to the first grade here—here in Marlborough and I forgot all my Greek. We went—went back to Greece, spent three years in Greece. I went to—I went to the fourth grade in—in Greece. And when we came back to America, I didn't know—I didn't know a word of English. I forgot all my English in three years. And then when I got here, they put me in a—in a class in Marlborough. What they—at that time, they had—they called it special—special class. They didn't have—and—and they had everybody, the—the ones that—handicap, people that couldn't speak English. Some—some of the youngsters had health problems. Then the—then the following year, they put me in fourth grade. One year, and I was able to speak. That's all. And then I was able to—you know, I pick up my English, one year.

LEVINE: And then did you forget your Greek again?

DAOPOULOS: Oh, no. I never forgot my Greek.

LEVINE: You kept both, then?

DAOPOULOS: No, because after—after that, I used to go—after we used to—after school, I went to Greek school in the afternoon, after we get through—after we get through school at the English school about 3:30. Four o'clock—four o'clock, we'd go to the—go to the church. And the priest would have—the priest would teach us the Greek in Greek. So we always kept—k—always kept up the Greek after that. Never—

LEVINE: So what, did you go for about an hour after—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, about an hour. Yeah.

LEVINE: —school?

DAOPOULOS: About four o'clock till five. Yeah, everyday. Every—three days a week. Greek grammar, Greek history. I think—and Greek—a lot of—they taught a lot of the—the—what you call it? The—the religion in—at the same time. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, were there many children in Greek school?

DAOPOULOS: Oh, yeah. We had—in Marlborough, we had about 40. Forty different—

LEVINE: Of all grades?

DAOPOULOS: All the same gra—different grades. Yeah, right. But one priest, different—different grades. Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow. Was Marlborough a place where there were other immigrant groups—

DAOPOULOS: Yes, Marlborough had—

LEVINE: —besides Greek?

DAOPOULOS: Besides Greeks.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Italians, a lot of Italians in there. And not—they had a French—they had a French section and—and—and Polish.

LEVINE: Huh.

DAOPOULOS: It was strictly a—a Yankee town and the Yankees—and Irish. They were the biggest then. And then we had, like I say, Greeks. They all lived in—there—they all lived in their special area. In one area, it was all Greeks. Another area—excuse me. Another area were the French. You had the French Hill. You had the—the Navy yard where all the Po—I don't know why they called them—where all the Polish and Lithuanian people were. All—all different areas were by—by this—I don't—by the—by their nationalities, you know.

LEVINE: Well, now, d—but did—did the children mix, even though the families lived in separate communities?

DAOPOULOS: Yep. We didn't have nothing—no problem. We all went to school. There was no things, you know. Even though, I'll tell you when I

grew up, even as a teenager, most of—most of my friends were Greeks. Most—most of my friends were Greeks. Yeah. And I—I think—and I think the Italians too. There was a lot of segregation then, as far as we were there. You know, they Greek kids, Italian kids, [unclear]. But no—no—we never had any problems.

LEVINE: Pre—you didn't have prejudice that was—

DAOPOULOS: No.

LEVINE: Interfered. Okay. Okay, I think we're going to pause here.

DAOPOULOS: Ah.

LEVINE: We'll turn over the tape and—

DAOPOULOS: Okay, fine.

LEVINE: —we'll continue.

DAOPOULOS: [unclear] took a lot of that—

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: Let's see. We're going to—we going to continue here. Let's back up a little bit to why the family came back to this country after you were three years in Greece.

DAOPOULOS: Af—okay. Well, because m—because my father, in the meantime, when we came over, 19—when I was three years old, it was only my mother and I went back to Greece. My father stayed in America to work. He worked—

LEVINE: What was he doing?

DAOPOULOS: He was working in a shoe factory.

LEVINE: In Marlborough.

DAOPOULOS: In Marlborough, right. And then—like I say, after—after 1929, I guess the doctor finally says, you know, it was all right to come back. So—because, I guess, we were planning to stay here. I don't know how—you know, at first, we were planning to stay in Greece and then things have changed. But like I say, I fi—figured

that my father had to stay here and make some money, because he had to borrow some money to send—to send us back to Greece. And where my mother had two brothers here, she was able—they were able to get—help us with the—with the money. And, you know, at that time, the—the boat fares were 25, \$50. You know, nothing. And that's why, after three years, we—we came back. We got—we got on the—the boat in Athens, on the Alesian [PH].

LEVINE: Now, were you seeing a doctor in Athens after you went back?

DAOPOULOS: No.

LEVINE: No.

DAOPOULOS: No. No, it was just my mother was being treated. How—treated by—she was treated by going to some—like, some kind of a retreat. Kind of be—not too many—around too many people.

LEVINE: Like a sanitarium?

DAOPOULOS: Please?

LEVINE: Like a sanitarium?

DAOPOULOS: N—well, something like that and an island for a while. Then—you know, then it was just normal. And then we just—like I say, then after a while, we—went to—to the city—to—in the big city of Volos. And that's where I went to school for four—up to the fourth grade. And then—then, I guess everything was cleared. My mother was cleared out to—to come back to the States.

LEVINE: Well, now, was your mother ill when she was in Marlborough?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah—oh, yes. Yeah.

LEVINE: Could you tell about the beginning of that? What happened—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, well—

LEVINE: —as far as her—

DAOPOULOS: It happened was—what happened was in 1923, which—when I was three years old, when—right after I—right after we came the first time, she became pregnant. And she had a—we had a—a sister, who, in 1926, which—when I was six years old, right before we went back to Greece, she—my sister got spinal meningitis and she

died. And my mother got down and she was so desperate, down. That's how—what—that's how she got sick.

LEVINE: She was so grieving of your—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, grieving.

LEVINE: —sister that [unclear].

DAOPOULOS: Grieving and everything. And that's how we went back. The doctors says to my father—he says, "If you want to save your wife, you better send her back to Greece, get into a different climate and a different environment. Otherwise, if she's going to stay here, she's go—going to die." And that's why we went back to Greece in 1926. And after three years that we stayed in Greece where she recuperated and everything, then—then the doctor says, "Well, you know, you can go back to the States." And that's when we came back in 1929.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Did she contract some physical illness at that time or—or was—you don't know?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, I—

LEVINE: It was a mixture of—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Right.

MARTHA: Didn't she have TB, Dad?

DAOPOULOS: Hmm?

MARTHA: Didn't she have TB?

DAOPOULOS: TB. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't—

LEVINE: She did have TB?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, that's what it was. I'm sorry. Yeah. Yeah, that's what it was. It was TB. And that was cleared up and then on the way back—shall I continue what happened?

LEVINE: Yeah.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, how we got—when we were coming back, like I say, on the ship, Alesia, and it took us 31 days, one month to come from Greece. Very old ship, down. You know, I think we were almost—what—what is the word? Suffrage?

MARTHA: Steerage.

DAOPOULOS: Steerage, steerage down below.

LEVINE: At the bottom.

DAOPOULOS: Down on the bottom like a jail. I can always remember, like a jail down there. Very, very rough crossing. My mother—my mother all—everyday, she used to take—she used to comb my hair. She was always afraid of me catching leeses.

MARTHA: Lice.

DAOPOULOS: Lices. I'm sorry. They—I don't know the—

LEVINE: Lice, uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Lices. And very—you know, no—how should I say? No intermingling. Very—we'd just be up on this—up on the top of this ship, come—once in a while I get a—a big—the big favor was my mother would give me a nickel. And I'd get a big choco [PH] bar and no—no activities. And then we were supposed to land in Providence. The boat was due to dock in Providence, Rhode Island. Well, when we got into Providence, somebody on board had scarlet fever. So they wouldn't let the boat dock. They said, "You've got to go through Ellis Island." And that's how I went through Ellis Island. Otherwise, I—otherwise, I would have got off—we would have got off in Providence.

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: And come right up here. But we—but where they said that, we went through—we went—we had to go to Ellis Island. And there, they saw the records that my mother had TB. So they quarantined her. They put her—they separated us. They took her to some separate unit and they kept her there two weeks.

LEVINE: Now, did you know what was going on?

DAOPOULOS: The—no. All I knew was—the last thing I can remember was—like I said, I couldn't speak English—was walking down a big hall,

leaving—my mother left me here and they told them—they told whoever to have him walk down here. Somebody else was going to pick me up down a big hall. So I had a hat. I had a big straw hat with a thing. And I had a back [unclear]—this is my mother telling me a lot of this stuff too. Had a [unclear]—just—I had a little suitcase, walked down a big—big hall, just kept going. Where did I end? The—the amazing thing, I don't know where I end but I—I could remember in a big, big hall in the—in it there must have been, I don't know, hundreds, maybe 500 cots all together.

LEVINE: Oh.

DAOPOULOS: All in one place. And everyone had a cot to sleep on.

LEVINE: Were you afraid? How did you [unclear]?

DAOPOULOS: I don't—I don't think I was afraid. I never even gave the thought, what could—what could happen? You know, here was a young—a young—and I don't—and I don't even remember too much of how I spent my two weeks there.

LEVINE: Did you know where your mother had been sent?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, I knew that she had—they took her to another p—part of the island.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: But why, I don't know. I don't remem—I don't know why they did that. And I spent—like I say, I spent two—two—sleeping there. And, you know, sometimes a little visual—you could see—I'd—I can—sometimes when I think hard enough about it, I can see a couple of big men, you know, at—where we were eating. But nothing—no conversation because, like I said, I don't remember if they had—if they put me in with Greek people. I—I just don't remember that. I don't remember that. But I remember going out—they—you know, every day we'd go outside and just—just sit down. And we used to get a lot of old box lunches, if I remember correctly. Most of the meals were, like, little box lunches.

LEVINE: What was in them? What—what [unclear]?

DAOPOULOS: What?

LEVINE: What was in the box lunch?

DAOPOULOS: Oh, you know, like an apple and a sandwich. I don't—I don't think we had that great of a meal then. And the—but, you know, actually, too much—too much thinking. I don't remember—I don't recall what I did too much on—on the island.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you recall what they did about the scarlet fever? I mean, did they quarantine everybody because somebody had scarlet fever on the boat?

DAOPOULOS: N—what they did was—no, they—the people that did—that were cleared, they just let them go through. They went through. And then—but—but, like I say, my mother, who had a problem, they took her and—and other people that they quarantined, I—I don't—I don't remember that.

LEVINE: Hmm.

DAOPOULOS: I don't recall anything like that. All I recall is me walking—walking down and just, pfffh, spent two weeks, you know—take—I remember—not—I don't even remember where—I can remember a little bit about shower—shower room, where they were—they were giving showers, big toilets, or just big, long things that—you know, like sometimes you get the ball games. These stadiums—no—no urinals or anything like that. Yeah. But—

LEVINE: And was it clean and were—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, oh.

LEVINE: —people nice to you?

DAOPOULOS: No, no, no, no. They—

LEVINE: Or not or—

DAOPOULOS: No, I don't remember—I mean, you know, I was—even after, when my mother picked me up, you know, two weeks, I don't know how I—what they were doing with our clothes. You know, how—they—somebody must have been washing them because I didn't have that many clothes. You know, sneaker—I think I had sandals then. That's what they—that's what I was—could afford in Greece and I had those sandals all the way through, you know, on the ship and—

and—and in the—and then, like I say, after two weeks—after two weeks, my—there, they cleared a—they cleared my mother. And they brought her to get me. And then my—my father came with my uncle from Marlborough with a car, picked us up and we drove back to Marlborough.

LEVINE: What was it like seeing your father again?

DAOPOULOS: Oh, boy. Boy, boy. There was—was—you know, it was almost, gee, over three years. Three years that I didn't see him, yeah. Yeah, so that was—but that's about—you know, the—what did—did I have? About how my leg—my leg got better, nine years old. And it—just went right into the American life. Like I said, I went into—went—I got into that special class. I learned my English. I think you learn English right away, especially youngsters. I mean, the friends—talking outside with the—the young people. My friends was English. It didn't take me long. And like I say, they put—they put me in fourth grade. And I went right through high school. And as it was, I graduated in 1938 from the high school. No, I graduated in 1939 from the high school.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

DAOPOULOS: Which I should have gr—which I should have graduated in 1938, because I lost three years when I went to Greece.

LEVINE: Did y—but you were in school there.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, yeah. Like I say, I went to the Greek school for four—

LEVINE: Right.

DAOPOULOS: That's—tha—that's experiences in Greece, going—going to school there.

LEVINE: How—talk about that.

DAOPOULOS: Oh, tough.

LEVINE: What was that like?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. Oh, what do you call it? Well, everything segregated, you know. Boys in the village, boys—they—tough. I g—I got some pictures; I don't know where they are—some pictures of me in school. Tough—you know, the—we all used to shave—they used to shave our hair because, again, they're afraid of—

LEVINE: Lice.

DAOPOULOS: —lices.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: And—and teachers—the teachers, boy. How—like, we see a lot of the old people. They all [unclear] stiff collar, the hair and [unclear]. You know. They're all—if you didn't know your lesson—nothing like today. Many a time you—you get strap. Sometimes, you used to be—but that also happened even in—even in the Greek school in Marlborough when I was going to Greek school here with a priest. Gee, if you didn't have—if you didn't know your lesson, boy, you used to get—get—get hit.

LEVINE: What'd you get hit with—

DAOPOULOS: Here. With a—

LEVINE: On your palms?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, the palms.

LEVINE: With what?

DAOPOULOS: With a—well, there for a while, what—what this priest used to say—he used to tell us, “You know, I went for a nice long walk today.” He says, “In the woods.” He says, “You know what I picked up?” He says, “I used to pick up these branches.” He says, [unclear] and bring them up. He's got them all to—he says, “If you don't know your lesson, bango, bango.” And then—and then—and then—then for a while we were taught, because our Greek church was right behind the high school, so after a while they let us go to school in—in—at school. They gave us a room at the school. And as it was, we were in a room that—it was a old—like a geometry or algebra room. So they used to have a lot of yardsticks. The teachers always used to complain. They never found yardsticks in the daytime. After Greek school was over, half of—half of the yardsticks would be broken. Bango. You know, you'd be doing—you know, bango! Right across the [unclear].

LEVINE: So did you learn to be a good boy as a result?

DAOPOULOS: To do—if you didn't behave, you know—

LEVINE: [chuckles]

DAOPOULOS: Well, we did—we were all—didn't—we were a good—

LEVINE: Yeah. I mean—

DAOPOULOS: But they—

LEVINE: You used to be truant, right?

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, yeah. It was—it was at—but—I lost my thought. What were we talking about now? About school—

LEVINE: About school in Greece and also the—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, I went to school.

LEVINE: —comparisons between the two schools.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, yeah. Like I say, they put me in fourth grade and, like I say, I lost three years but—but I gained one year somewhere because, instead of '37, I graduated in '39, so two years later then.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And then what did you do once you graduated?

DAOPOULOS: I graduated. I—I—I started working in a restaurant and—and this was back in '39. And I was going to night school in Boston. I was taking a bus from Marlborough. I was ta—I was going to Baudette [PH] Business College taking up a—taking up business administration. I did that for—for a year or—a year or two. And then—then—then the for—the war started in 1941. And—and I got a—I went to Hartford, Connecticut because they [unclear], got into and started working for the Pratt Whitney down there at the aircraft factory working in the—the factory in the testing. And from there—from there, I got drafted.

LEVINE: Oh.

DAOPOULOS: I got drafted and I—I went into the service, 19—1943. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, just—how did the Depression here affect you and your family?

DAOPOULOS: Ah, 1920. Well, we got in—we got here in 1929. I think—I think the—the—why we didn't feel it, the thing—mostly, we didn't—financially, it was tough because we had to—when we came back from Greece in 1929, we had to live with—we had to live in a—in my aunt's house. They had a house, a two-apartment house. And they lived upstairs and then they had a couple of attic rooms up in the attic. And there for—for about six, seven months when we first got here from Greece, that's—we lived there. Then we got in—then we—then we moved into—this was in, like I say, '29. So as far as the Depress—we didn't have any money. You know, my father, I think, was making probably \$10 a week. And then we moved—then we moved into an apartment downtown in Marlborough in what they call—what they called a furnished apartment. Two bedrooms, kitchen and a living room, all furnished, all furnished. So we didn't have to buy that. So we—we lived in there for, oh, about four or five years and then were able to move to another. In the meantime, my—my mother didn't work but my father—my father was working in the shoe factory.

LEVINE: Now, did you ever have any other—any sisters or brothers?

DAOPOULOS: I had—I—yeah, 19—when—when was Bessie—yeah, we got here '29—1929. In 1930, I had a sister. My sister was—my sister was born, 1930. And the problem with her was—she was—this was—all comes into financial problems and—and my sister, when she was one years old, she developed—she developed polio. She developed polio. That was when there was a big epidemic of polio. She was completely paralyzed. And what they did in the—the little house—little house that we lived—they had put up a sign, "Quarantine, Infantile Paralysis." No—no—my father—my father stayed with my aunt so she—he could work. But my mother and fa—but my sister, Bessie, and I w—she was one and I was 10 years old at that time. What—

LEVINE: So you were quarantined.

DAOPOULOS: Please?

LEVINE: You were quarantined.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. Oh, yeah. I had—I—I couldn't go to school. I was quarantined and she—but little by little, one of her—one of her arms came back normal. The other arm came back and—and the other—one leg came back. The other—one leg never ever—never [unclear]. It was just paralyzed.

LEVINE: What kind of treatment was she getting?

DAOPOULOS: What—they would—the—the local doctor—the local doctor was duly—was mostly exercise. Exercise and—and what—what the had to do—my mother had to do was had to get—get her on the bus two or three days a week and bring her to Boston at the Children's Hospital. Who'd think now, you know, after 10, 12 years—

LEVINE: I just don't—I don't want the background if I can help it.

DAOPOULOS: Oh, yeah. Okay.

LEVINE: Yeah. After two or three years—

DAOPOULOS: After two or three years, you know—that after a few years, I was in the Children's Hospital, and then my sister would be in the Children's Hospital after—it's amazing, isn't it?

LEVINE: Yes.

DAOPOULOS: And—and she was going into the—she was going into the—they'd go in—she'd bring her into Boston and—close the door. That's it.

LEVINE: That's good. Thanks.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. They—they—what they would do with her is exercising her, you know. I guess that was the only therapy that—

LEVINE: Yeah.

DAOPOULOS: —they would have for polio. But she—but she never—never recuperated from the leg. Her leg has been—and she's still alive. And she—in the meantime, she grew up. She—teenager. She went through school. She became a schoolteacher. She got married. She went to Greece and got married.

LEVINE: Huh.

DAOPOULOS: She has a family now, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: And—

LEVINE: Was Sister Kenny treatment around at that time? Sister Kenny? Remember—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Sister Kenny, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was that—that was before that?

DAOPOULOS: We—I think—gee, I don't know exactly, Janet.

LEVINE: Yeah. It seems to me—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: —that the—I know it was exercise.

DAOPOULOS: There were a lot—yeah, exercise.

LEVINE: Hot sand.

DAOPOULOS: I don't know.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about hot sand?

DAOPOULOS: No.

LEVINE: No.

DAOPOULOS: The—the thing I remember was what happened with her was later on she was growing normally. Her—her body was growing normally. Her left leg, the good one, was growing normally. The right leg—the right leg was, you know, shorter and shorter and shorter. She wore—she had to wear a brace.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: And what they did—we finally—I don't know how my—you know, it makes a lot of difference when—when a parent can speak the

language. You know, you—you'd probably get somebody that—a—an immigrant trying to talk. But my mother—she was able to get her on—into the Shriner's Hospital—

LEVINE: Oh.

DAOPOULOS: —in Springfield, which at that time was—was on—on crippled children. And what they did with her was they operated on her good leg to stop from growing.

LEVINE: Oh, my goodness! Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: So—so in other words—

LEVINE: They'd be more balanced.

DAOPOULOS: More—yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Huh.

DAOPOULOS: So—so they did that and—but still, now—now, she's—now, she's getting post-polio problems.

LEVINE: Oh, my.

DAOPOULOS: After all these years. You know, she's—she started—she got it at one years old and now she's—she's 68. You know, she still dr—she still drives. She walks around with a—with a—with a, you know, walker, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Wow. So how long were you quarantined for when—when she came down with polio?

DAOPOULOS: I think—I think it was something like 10 to 12 days, 10 to 12 days. And believe me, there we a l—there was quite a few cases in—in Marlborough. Not—you know, at that time, there probably was 30—30, 40 cases of people coming down with polio. There was a big epidemic in—in—this was 19—she was born in '30 so it was 1931.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: She was—it was the big polio thing.

LEVINE: And were people dying of it?

DAOPOULOS: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: So your mother must have felt—

DAOPOULOS: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: —as though—she had lost one child.

DAOPOULOS: Well, lost one—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: And, actually, she was—[chuckles] and the thing was when she was—Bessie was named after the first Bessie, the same name, you know.

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: So you never—you never know. But—but, like I say, very—very smart girl. She went through college, got her degree, very early learning how to drive. I think—I think she had more—more guts than I did.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: You know, then.

LEVINE: So what happened then after? You went to the business school. Then did you—

DAOPOULOS: I went into the service.

LEVINE: Oh, and then you went into the service.

DAOPOULOS: I went into the service and I was in the service for only one year— one year. Because the outfit that I was going—that I was in—I was in the Air Corps, the Air Force—were going to—the Air Force was being sent to England and they—they had us all checked up to see if we were flying. But they knew about my leg because they— because I was turned down the first time. So they said to me, “Well, George, you either have to be 1A,” as they said that time, “or you have to get a discharge.” Well, I—I started thinking. I said,

“Gee.” You know, at that time, Janet, every—everybody wanted to be in the service. It’s not like today. You know, it was—all my friends were in the service. And—and I—and I think we had a little more patriotic—you know, we had a job to do. The Army had to go there and do this thing. So—but my commanding officer said, “George.” Said, “If you have a chance to get out now, get out.” He says, “You done your—you done your year’s service. Don’t push it anymore.” So—so I decided to get my medical discharge. I came home.

LEVINE: Where did you go? What was your year like in the service?

DAOPOULOS: Okay, great. That’s why I had one great year. A lot of people didn’t like it. Most of my time—most of my time I was stationed down in Texas—down in Texas. And I went to visit Houston. I was at—at a college, Sam Houston Teacher’s College in Huntsville. And I went to Houston, Texas. Who knew later—who knew then, in 1943, that I’d be going every—every year to Texas afterward to Houston, that my—my daughter would be [unclear]? You know. You know, here you are—here you are, a little guy from Marlborough. You know, I says, “What am I doing? What am I doing down here in Texas?”

LEVINE: What were you doing?

DAOPOULOS: [chuckles] Doing survey—well, I went to col—I went to a college to learn how to do what you call it? To learn [unclear] administration, how to work in the headquarters. Even though I was in the Air Corps, I never flew. I was working in an office. And then from there, I went to Salt Lake City. And from Salt Lake City, they assigned me to a—a big air base in Washington State, Moses Lake, with—which had the big flying fortress, the big bombers, which they were taking over to Europe [unclear]. And that’s where I got—I came home from va—vacation—for a furlough. And I went back and then I got my discharge in—I don’t even remember what. It was September or October. I came back home and I—then I—I got a job in Raytheon making—making some radar tubes, worked there for—and then I got married. I got married in ’44.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Wh—when you look back on that year-stint in the—in the Army or in the Air Force—

DAOPOULOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —what was it—did you meet from all over the country?

DAOPOULOS: Oh, oh—

LEVINE: What was that like for you?

DAOPOULOS: Oh. Well, you know, when I left Marlborough—when I left Marlborough, we left with two—two busloads. Two busloads. All the ones I grew up with. You know, they were all my age. We go to Devens. We get our physical. We got our physical and then—and then they start—we started getting interviewed to what part of the branch they—what they were going to send us. Somebody went this way. Somebody went to the parachutes. Somebody went to the quartermaster. Somebody went here—chemical. Well, what happened was, all of a sudden, all my friends in the—we're all in the same barracks. All of a sudden, everybody was—every day, somebody was going. And then, all of a sudden, I'm left by myself. I said, "Now, why would I be left by myself?" So—so they—what I did was, most of the time, just work—go in the—work in the kitchen. Because they knew I used to work in a restaurant, so they—they put me in the kitchen. And then, finally, they called me and they says, "You're leaving tomorrow." So I got my—my barracks bag. They bring me down to this big—big building. I—here I am in there by myself. Then all of a sudden, it's different people come in, not—not knowing anyone. Not knowing anyone. They—they put us—they put us on the train. We start heading out of Fort Devens. And then, "Where are we going?" Nobody knew where we were going. We just kept going and going and going. Then, finally, we got down to St. Louis. "Well, where are we going?" is still the question ev—you know, we talk among ourselves. "Where are you going? Where"—so we finally got—the train finally stopped and it was at Wichita Falls, Kan—Wichita Falls, Texas for Shepherd Air Base. "Jeez, what are we doing down here?" You know, here we are, all locals. And we—we spent, I think, two months down there for basic training.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

DAOPOULOS: The [unclear]. Then, after that, interview again. Everybody gone to different parts of the—different parts of the country. And you make—and you make friends.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

DAOPOULOS: You know, when you meet them. You go in there. You—you don't know anybody. Next thing you know, you're—you know, you're their buddies.

LEVINE: You have a friend, yeah.

DAOPOULOS: You're buddies, yeah.

LEVINE: Well, we—we don't have too much time left.

DAOPOULOS: Okay.

LEVINE: So let me just quickly ask you—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: What is your—was your wife's name?

DAOPOULOS: My wife's name was Sophia [PH].

LEVINE: And he maiden name?

DAOPOULOS: It was Kujas [PH]. Sophia Kujas. I—we grew up together in Marlborough. We grew up together. She was b—she was born in Marlborough. And like I said before, Greeks used to be together. The church kept us together with a choir. We used to put on Greek plays and we didn't—we had boys and girls together, not—not romantically. You know, it would just—we—just growing up together. We just grew—went through high school and then, I think right before I—right before I went to the service, through my—through my—through my wife's sister's wedding—is that right?

MARTHA: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Oh, yeah. Through my wife's sister's wedding, she was a bridesmaid and—and I was an usher. And that's where we finally got a little bit close. Then I got start—you know, asking her. We started having a few dates. But we had a problem. The big problem was there was five sisters in my—and five sisters in my wife's family.

LEVINE: And she wasn't the only—

DAOPOULOS: She was the youngest one. Yeah. She was the youngest one. And the oldest one was the—was the one that got married. You see? And there were three other sisters in between. And—and, well, you know, when we finally decided to get—well, to make a long story short, when we decided to get married, my in-laws said, "Wait a minute. This does—this doesn't happen." He says—

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A]

LEVINE: —that your sis—

DAOPOULOS: My sister's—

LEVINE: Your—your wife had—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, right.

LEVINE: —had two older sisters.

DAOPOULOS: Like I—like I said before, there were five sisters. And when the oldest one got married, like I say, Helen, she—and this is where I got a little bit clo—we started getting a later more serious with—with Sophia. And—and what we had a problem, when—when we decided to get married, naturally, we had to go up to her folks. And they—they kind of objected because of the reason. They says, “Wait a minute.” They says, “The custom in Greece”—he says, “You’ve got three older sisters. They should get married fir—before you do.” You know? Well, Sophie says, “Nothing doing.” She says, “I—I got George and we—we’re going to get”—and then they—they had a cousin in Wobun [PH], Charlie Otis [PH], who was kind of a—well, he was the bo—he was the boy cousin. So he had a little influence with—with my in-laws. So they went—they went to—they went to Charlie and Charlie—we came to Marlborough and he says—and he said—you know, you—he discussed it with my in-laws. And they says, “You can’t do that.” He says, “You know, this is ol—this is a new country. And you’re—and you’re getting”—like he says, “You’re getting a nice—a nice Greek boy.” You know, it’s always—all—they always worried, you married outside of your—outside of your religion, especially. So—so we—like I said, we—we got engaged before I went—so they approved of it, anyways. So—

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: —we got engaged before I went in the Army. Then after I got out, we got married in April—April 30th, 1944. Hmm? 1944. Yeah. And in—in the meantime, I was working—I was working in—in Waltham at the Raytheon. And while I was there, Martha was born. She was born in 1945, the following year. And—and then the war came and the—the plant closed down. And it said, “We will call you. We’ll call all the workers when we open up after.” Wh—what are we going to need? Well, in the meantime, my brother-in-law, who was married to the oldest sister, he was a foreman in a shoe factory

in Marlborough. He says, "George." He says, "While you're waiting—while you're waiting to be called back, why don't you come to work, you know?" At that time, while—while I was working in—in—at Raytheon, I was working 50 hours a week, 10 hours a day. And I was making \$60 a week. That—that was the salary, \$60. So he says, "You know, you've got to live. So why don't you come to work down at the shoe factory? And then when you get called, you go back?" Well, I went to work in the shoe factory. I stayed there five years. Never—never—never went back to the shoe factory.

LEVINE: Never went back to Raytheon.

DAOPOULOS: I mean—sorry, never went back to Raytheon. So then—then I had the opportunity to go into the restaurant business with my uncle, my fa—my mother's brother that was here years ago in Worcester. So I took that up with him and I be—became a partner in a—in a restaurant.

LEVINE: And what was the name?

DAOPOULOS: The name of the—the name of the restaurant was Stewart's [PH]—Stewart's Diner, was the old diners that they used to have, stools. We—and I stayed there—and then after a while we extended it. We made a big—a big dining room—dining room. Very—very busy, was a—it was more of a family—family restaurant. And I—as it was, I got—my wi—my wife was working there. She was—I was working in the kitchen, sometimes on the counter. My wife was helping out. They all—we had—we had five partners.

LEVINE: Hmm.

DAOPOULOS: And we all had our wives. So in other words, all—it was almost like a family restaurant, always part of—some of the family was there in the restaurant, even the—even Martha worked there later on and my son, Jimmy. And then in 1966, one day, July 3rd, working like heck, one of cooks didn't come in. So I had to work in the kitchen the day before the Fourth, was busy, worked so hard. I went home. I sat and down and got a heart attack. Just felt—got a heart attack, rushed me to hospital. Three weeks in the hospital, recuperated, went back to the restaurant, a little slow, a little—but a little at a time. And finally, the following year, my partners bought me out. So I got out of the restaurant business. And then—then I had a few—I went to work at—at Jordan Marsh, which is a—you've heard—

LEVINE: Department store.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, department store—with my wife. We all had—we always worked together. She worked up in the Lady's Department. I was working in the shipping room. And then after that, we—we moved—then we got back to—well, then the department that I was working in—in—in Jordan Marsh moved out of Framingham. They moved to the—to Boston, the department. So I was out of a job. So I went to work. They were building a brand new—brand new—what's that—RCA building in Marlborough. Big—they were really being—they—they were planning to build 12-story—it was 12-story building. And half—and we—I worked there in a restaurant. I got—I got Sophie. She worked there. So both of us were working and we lived five—five minutes away from—from the factory. So it was very nice.

LEVINE: Did you move from Marlborough when you were in Worcester?

DAOPOULOS: No, never. No, never. No. We almost moved to Worcester. We almost bought a home in Worcester. But when we made up our mind to buy a home in Worcester and we met—we were going to meet with a real estate agent, well, we waited an hour. He never showed up. He had probably some other place. In the meantime, when we were going back home, we changed our mind and we stayed in Marlborough. Then we—we work at—we worked at RCA. Great—great, great opportunity. Then one—then one Saturday—Friday afternoon, comes over the—over the radio, they're closing up the factory. No notice. They were hiring. They hired people on Thursday, engineers. Friday, they closed it down. And then from there, I—I says, "Well, I've got to find"—because of my heart attack, I had to get something from company for my insurance policies. And I said, "Well, why don't I try the bank?" I says, "Jeez, I'm going to all these jobs." So I applied and I got a job in the local bank. And I stayed there. And then that bank merged with a bank from Worcester. Then it merged with Charmad [PH] Bank and, finally, it merged with Fleet. So until they—I worked there for 10 years.

LEVINE: Until you retired.

DAOPOULOS: Then retired.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: But in the meantime, my wife got—became—she worked for the school department as a receptionist and telephone operator at a regional vocational school. So we're still—everyday I'd go up to the vocational school. They had a cafeteria. We'd eat there. So

everything worked great for us. And then, like I say, 19—19—what is it? '83, was it? '83—retired, decided to retire.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Ca—came down here. I wanted to go to Florida. She—she didn't want to. She—we had plans to go to Florida, retire in Florida. In the meantime, she changed her mind. She want—she wanted the Cape. Never—I was never a Cape man but, believe me, after—after—after—after we moved down here for—after we bought the house, for a month, I couldn't sleep. I says, "What am I doing? What am I doing, moving to the Cape? That's just not my place." And believe me, it wasn't a month later, when we'd go to Marlborough and then come down, I couldn't wait to get over the bridge and say, "Sophie, we're home." Loved it. I loved it till, you know, like I say, then we'd spend the—our winters, we'd go to—Texas. And from there, we'd—they had bought a condominium at—where was it? Destin? In Destin in Florida. We'd spend our winter there and come home. Beautiful. And then one—19—when was it? 1990? In 1990, while we're down in Destin, Sophie got sick. We went to the hospitals with—what was it? Lifilma?

MARTHA: Lymphoma.

DAOPOULOS: Lymphoma. Brought her here. Brought her into the—the Dana-Farber Institute, great things. That was in January. Yeah, February—in September, she passed away. Yeah. Different—different life after that, was—it's never been the same for me here. As—you know, I still love it. I still like it but it's not the same as it was with her at the—I [unclear]—I remember Martha saying, "Dad, it'll never be the same." And I could see that. And—and what I usually do since then, I leave November because I have a son. My son, Jimmy, very interesting guy. He works—he's a mortgage broker in Kentucky, Lexington. He went through University of—University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky. Right now, he's—he's also—10 years ago—10 years ago, he became—he's a football official, an umpire.

LEVINE: Ah.

DAOPOULOS: And he works for the National Football League.

LEVINE: Okay.

DAOPOULOS: And as it is tonight—tonight, he's on TV for what do you call it? He's doing the Hall of—he's doing the Hall of Fame game in—in Canton, Ohio.

LEVINE: Oh, wow.

DAOPOULOS: So—

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: So—but that's—

LEVINE: But tell me grandchildren.

DAOPOULOS: Grandchildren. Okay, I have two—two grandchildren from Martha. Debby and—Debby and Jennifer. How old are they?

LEVINE: Thirty-one and twenty-nine.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, one is married and I have two great grandchildren.

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: That's wonderful.

DAOPOULOS: One is Dean—is—he's three-and-a-half years old. And the other one is Sophia after—after my wife. And, yeah, that too. And then I have—I have a granddaughter and a grandson from my son, Jimmy.

LEVINE: Ah.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, just thinking back about coming here as a little boy—

DAOPOULOS: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: I mean, twice, but do you think that made a difference in—in the kind of person that you became, this—this early immigration and—

DAOPOULOS: Oh—

LEVINE: How do you think it affected you—

DAOPOULOS: Positively.

LEVINE: —person—personally?

DAOPOULOS: Positively. I think—I think my—I mean, here you—you—I had all my—I could do everything. You know, I never—I never had want from everything. You know, if I wanted something, my—whatever they—not big. If I wanted something, my father would get it. Now, in Greece—in Greece, you know, the—how should I say it? The people are so poor that when we went back in 1963 we saw clothes that my mother had sent to the people over there. The youngsters were wearing them.

LEVINE: Hmm.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah. As far as poverty, you know, and—and there, I was very fortunate. I went through high school here and I had one year of college. There—there, you go to—you go to grammar school in the village. Then, you have to take—there's probably 50 villages. They have to take exams and they take—they only take the highest ones to go to—to go to the—the high school in the city. And then—and then it's the same way. High school, you want to go to college. You know, there—I think there's only one university in Athens, the University of Athens. As far as—like I say, as far as education, not—you know, I consider myself very fortunate that I even had a high school education. You know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

DAOPOULOS: And you—you—and as far—and then the main thing too, Janet, I always considered myself lucky. I—I come in here and I served in the American Army. If I was in Greece, I would have served in the Greek Army. And who knew there? Fighting the Germans and the—and the Italians. And—and as it was—as it was, that wasn't bad. They had a big civil war after the—after the Second War. They were—I had cousins—I had cousins that—families—families—one family would be communist and the other family would be nationalist.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

DAOPOULOS: They'd kill each other. They'd kill each other. You know, I mean, I—when I went back, you know, I met—I met a few of them. And mostly, I met them through my mother because, you know, I never knew them. And you—you see, even the—even the one that—

even the ones that were communist, they served their time in jail. And they had their names in red. You—they could—after—after the war—after the war—after the communists lost in the—I remember—do you remember the history? Truman sent the Marshall Plan over there and saved—saved. The communists were almost right outside of Athens to get the—to beat—win the—win Greece. And the United States come in over there. Now, those cousins of mine, you know, they went—they served their time. They had to go to jail. And no matter where they went, they couldn't leave the village. They couldn't leave their towns unless they got permission from the police department. Their name—their name at the—at the town hall—their names were down in red, communists. They had—now, you know, who knows what—what would have happened to me? I know—I know one other cousin that I was told—same name as me, G—George Daopoulos, just newly married, a little boy. He had a little youngster. Another first cousin. Now, we're talking close relatives. They got him. They took him up to the mountains. He wouldn't join. He wouldn't join the—the communists. They did—they beheaded him.

LEVINE: Hmm.

DAOPOULOS: They beheaded him, took—they took him down. They took him. They got him—got him in the val—the village. They knocked on the door of his wife's house. She opened the door. They—they rolled the—they rolled the—the thing. So I'm so happy that I never went through this, which I would have had—which I would have had to do if I—if my folks didn't—if we didn't come back in '29. Yeah. That's—that's the main thing. That's the biggest thing.

LEVINE: That's pretty serious.

DAOPOULOS: [chuckles] Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, right. [chuckles]

DAOPOULOS: It sure is. It sure is. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I think we'll close here.

DAOPOULOS: Very good.

LEVINE: I want to thank you for an absolutely wonderful interview.

DAOPOULOS: That's all right, my—it's been my pleasure.

LEVINE: Yeah, and—

DAOPOULOS: It's been my pleasure.

LEVINE: —is there anything else you want to say before we close?

DAOPOULOS: No, I—I tell you. I was very impressed when I went in 19—at the—
when we went to visit the—

LEVINE: Ellis Island?

DAOPOULOS: —the Ellis Island. It—you know, it did—it did bring some memories
back. But I think the main—the main memory was, you know—it
was—impressed me was the—seeing the banner of the ship that I
came over, the Alesia. The others, you know, I couldn't believe it. I
said, "Gee, my gosh." And, you know, the other thing too, now.
I'm—when I went back, was—I was in the 70s, right? How did I
remember—how do you—sometimes, how do you remember a
ship, being nine years old, that you came over? Maybe it was
because it was a bad experience with—you know, with—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: —with that ship. But th—that's the main thing, you know. And then
the ap—and then the thing that I had my name on the wall.

LEVINE: Of honor.

DAOPOULOS: On the wall. They sent me a—I have—I have the—

LEVINE: Certificate?

DAOPOULOS: —the thing there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: And I think—did I—I think I even got a—a what do you call it? A
medal. Did I get—did they send medals?

MARTHA: Yeah, it was some kind of a pen.

DAOPOULOS: I think it's right over there. Yeah, some kind of a—maybe because
the—I belong to a Greek fraternal order, the Aheppa [PH]. And
they've had special nights there, which they—they committed
themselves to a lot of money at the beginning.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: A lot of money wh—when it was, I think—

LEVINE: Restoring it, uh-huh.

DAOPOULOS: Be way over there, Martha, in that little something there.

LEVINE: Well, we can—

DAOPOULOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Let's—let's just close off this.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, fine.

LEVINE: And then we can look at the medal and everything.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, fine.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I want to thank you so much.

DAOPOULOS: That's all right. You're quite welcome.

LEVINE: You've been wonderful.

DAOPOULOS: I'm very happy that, finally, this—my number came up, as they say, to come. You know, when I wrote it, I—I didn't know exactly what they expect, anyways.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DAOPOULOS: And I'm, you know—Jeez, I'm very happy that you did come up and get—and, you know, some—and I was glad I was home because they went to the beach that day. They went to the beach that day and they said, "Dad, Dad, you missed it. It was a beautiful day." I says, "No, I didn't miss it."

LEVINE: Wow.

DAOPOULOS: I says, "Let me tell you what I got." Maybe if I went to the beach—maybe when you called me, I don't know.

LEVINE: I would have found you.

DAOPOULOS: You would have called back. [chuckles]

LEVINE: I would have called you back. [chuckles]

DAOPOULOS: Okay.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Okay, thank you.

DAOPOULOS: Yeah, you're welcome. You're welcome.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine. I've been speaking with George Daopoulos, who came to this country in 1929 when he was nine years of age. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And I'm signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]