

EI-1160

MARIE IRENE RANIERI JONES

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INTERVIEWER: GEORGE TSELOS

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ITALY, 1920

AGE: 7

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PORT:

RESIDENCES:

JONES: [clears throat] I hope my voice is clearer.

TSELOS: It'll be fine. Good afternoon. This is George Tselos of the National Park Service. Today is Thursday, August 10th, the year 2000, and I'm at the sound studio at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. I'm interviewing Marie Irene Jones, who came to the United States from Italy in 1920 when she was seven years old. Why don't you—Mrs. Jones, why don't be—begin by giving me your full name and when you were born?

JONES: I was born 2-13—no, 2—February the 23rd, 1913.

TSELOS: And what was your family name?

JONES: Ranieri.

TSELOS: Okay.

JONES: R-A-N-I-E-R-I.

TSELOS: And where were you born in Italy?

JONES: Masimashinia [PH].

TSELOS: Oh, is that a—a large town or a small town or—

JONES: No, you know—you know where Lucca [PH] is?

TSELOS: Yes.

JONES: Rome and Lucca. Well, this is a—a little village above—

TSELOS: I see.

JONES: —Lucca.

TSELOS: I see. Do you remember very much about the village that you were living in?

JONES: Yes, I remember the church and I remember the cemetery because my mother was buried at the cemetery. And the church was, you know, [unclear] livelihood.

TSELOS: Can you tell me a little bit about your family, the number of brothers and sisters you had and whether you're—

JONES: Well, we just have six sisters, and I'm the youngest, and one brother.

TSELOS: And what was your life like in the village up until the time when you—

JONES: Well—

TSELOS: —came to the United States?

JONES: My case, I lived with my grandmother. Somehow, from what I learned when my mother died, there were the—there were the—the six girls. And they—and we had a—oh, a plot of land that they raised corn and beans to—for us to eat. And what was left, they sold.

TSELOS: Did you help with the farming, gardening of this plot of land?

JONES: Even at that age, I did. I lived—oh, I lived with my grandmother. She lived a—a few miles away from my sisters. My sisters stayed at the home that—I guess that I was born in.

TSELOS: I see. So your sisters and your brothers stayed but you went—you were living with your grandmother then?

JONES: For some reason, they sent me—being that I was too young, they sent me with my grandmother.

TSELOS: How long was your father with the family before he came to this country?

JONES: Gee, now, that—that question is difficult to answer because, well, he married my mother and—and had seven children. But in between time, he would come to America, I think they said to work. He used to have a buggy and a horse and he would take people, like a cab, you know.

TSELOS: Oh, I see. I see.

JONES: So he made his money that way. And he'd stay there for, I guess as long as he could. And then he'd come back and have another child.

TSELOS: What was life like at your grandmother's place?

JONES: For me?

TSELOS: Yes.

JONES: It was not very good. I always—she was not a very kind grandmother. I always remembered her—you know, I always wanted to be with my sisters. And—and once in a while I'd run away and there was a fence that I'd have to get over. And every time I'd try to jump that fence, she'd take the broom and throw it and she'd always hit me.

TSELOS: Oh. So you didn't get to see your brothers and sisters very often then? Your—

JONES: No.

TSELOS: —brother and sisters very often?

JONES: No, th—they lived, like, we were up here and they were down here, just—I could—I could run it, you know, which I did. I—I wanted to be with my sisters and brothers instead of my grandmother. My grandfather was wonderful but my grandmother was not very nice to me. For some reason, she blamed my mother, I guess, for having all the kids and it—you know, I really don't know why—why she was so mean to me. But she really did not like me to go to—with my sisters. She wanted to keep me.

TSELOS: When you were living with your grandmother, did you help with the housekeeping and the work around the—

JONES: Oh, yes.

TSELOS: —around the house?

JONES: Oh, yes. I did. I—I helped her. But I—I preferred it when I was with my sisters and picking the beans and the corn.

TSELOS: How did it happen that all of the children came to the United States?

JONES: Well, my mother died with me in her arms. And sh—and they said it was a very difficult thing for her. You know, she had seven kids, no husband. So anyhow, she called my oldest sister and said, “Don’t desert the kids. Do everything you can to keep the kids together.” And my—my sister really did it, though it must have been pretty difficult. She—when the passports on the [unclear] came for the three children to come to America, she remembered that promise and said, “Nobody goes or we all go.” And—and though I was very young, I remember that very well, that I was going to be with them, you know.

TSELOS: So she managed to get all the children then—

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: —down to where the—to get passports and get them down to the ship?

JONES: Yeah. What she did, though she was young and not educated, being that we had a little bit of land and we used to h—have corn and beans, and we’d sell up what we didn’t eat. She sold a—a—a lot to the neighbors or something, enough to take the rest of the kids.

TSELOS: I see.

JONES: That’s how we all got together. You know, I guess the neighbors were very helpful.

TSELOS: Did she sell the land also?

JONES: She sold the land.

TSELOS: I see. And how did you—was it a long trip to get to where you got onto the ship to come to this country?

JONES: Well, all I remember is we had like a cart to carry the vegetables into Rome or—to sell the—and we just all got into the cart. And I was little. I remember being crushed by—as they all got in and they brought us to the ship. And when we got there, somebody came and kind of took over, took us over, counted us and brought us in this great big room. I think it was the room in there. Great big room. And—and there was a lot more people there. So how the separated us, they had a rope, said, “All you, stay in this room and don’t move until they lift the rope for you.” They’d call you, you know. And so we were—we were in there, oh, about a week. But they were very nice. They fed us and they—they treated us very nice.

TSELOS: What was the voyage across the ocean like on the ship?

JONES: Well, I remember that distinctly because I remember I was laying on a—resting, I guess, in the afternoon in the c—cot. And I was playing with the water. And I said to my sister, “Where’s the—what’s this water?” And she—“Oh, it’s nothing. Just”—you know, “Just be quiet.” And that water was coming—I don’t know. I—I thought that somebody spilled some water or something. But it was quite a bit of water and I was shooting it back and forth.

TSELOS: So the water was—the ship was leaking and the water was inside the ship then?

JONES: And, that’s right. And where we were, we were at the bottom of the ship, I guess. So then, I—me, being in the cot, I could actually—water was almost up to the cot. And—and then my brother—then—yes, because then I remember all the men were called and they were all—had buckets and they were—and—and they made even my brother—and my brother was very young. So we felt terrible, you know, that my brother was taken to—to empty the ship, I guess.

TSELOS: That sounds like a dangerous situation with so much water coming into the ship.

JONES: It was very dangerous. And—and I remember when the—the United States ship, a beautiful ship, came and they were all saying that they were going to save us. But then, you know, there were three floors, first, second and—and us. And—and so they—we watched them as they took all the first class and then all the second class. And we moved up to the second class then from the b—from the bottom. And so that I always remembered that, because when I got to the United States and we went to school I always remembered the teacher saying, you know, on certain things, so it was always children and women first.

TSELOS: But it wasn't that way.

JONES: It wasn't that way. I always remembered—affect me. You know, I thought, 'Gee, that's not true.'

TSELOS: Did they have—did they an—did they take everybody off the ship eventually or how did the ship—

JONES: No.

TSELOS: —come to—

JONES: No. We were—we—when we came here, that other—that American ship escorted us, went alongside of us.

TSELOS: I see.

JONES: So that they were kind of, I guess—and we—and we pulled into the United States by—by our Liberty—

TSELOS: Did you see the Statue of Liberty as you came in?

JONES: Oh, when we came in we seen it and I didn't know what it was, really, but all the people went to that side of the ship. And they were all—and the captain—they were hollering, you know, "Move back!" because they was—they all went to the other side to look what—

TSELOS: They were probably—

JONES: And I—

TSELOS: —afraid the ship would turn over—

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: —if everybody got on one side.

JONES: And I—and I seen this beautiful lady standing up there with the light. I didn't know what it was but it was very effective because the people were all screaming and k—kissing each other. And, you know, so I knew that it was something pretty good. It was the lady we came home to.

TSELOS: So when you came through Ellis Island, what was that like? Did they keep you together, as a family? Or did different brothers and—did your brother and your sisters get split up—

JONES: No, they—they—they put the whole family together and they put a rope around it. And they said, “Don’t get out of that rope unless we lift it.” And it was really funny because every once in a while they would lift the rope and then we’d all run under it. And then some—we didn’t make it so then we’d all have to go back with the ones that didn’t make it.

TSELOS: Did they have interpreters there, people who could speak Italian who talked to you—

JONES: Yeah, there was—

TSELOS: —in your own language?

JONES: There was a couple of ‘em that really—they were very—you know, they really were helpful because they asked about the—who we had in America beside my father that—that didn’t send the passport for all of us. So my—my sister told her about my Aunt Funyetti [PH]. And we had about three aunts in United States that we—we knew of and that my sisters always talked about so that I knew about ‘em. And one aunt had a hotel and a restaurant, that they were pretty well off, you know. So the—so then this one person that was kind of in charge of us, he wired this Funyetti. She was a—an aunt in San Francisco. But everybody—all the other aunts were in—living in Stockton. And my father w—went to Stockton, I guess, to stay with these a—aunts. And anyway, we were sent to Stockton from Ellis Island on a train. And I always remembered that because it was—the train was going right by buildings, houses, you know, and when—and when we were in a hotel, the train was right by the—coming right through us.

TSELOS: Had you been on a train before? Had you ever been on a train—

JONES: Never.

TSELOS: —in Italy?

JONES: I had never seen it. I’d never seen a—a train before. We didn’t know what it was. And in fact, that’s when I had a banana, like in that picture. And I ate the—the banana sh—shot out and I was trying to eat the cover of the banana.

TSELOS: Oh, the skin. I see. So that was the first time you’d ever had a banana then.

JONES: Yes. And I was trying to eat it and it—and the—

TSELOS: [chuckles]

JONES: —banana flew out. So I just left it on the floor and started eating the—I always remembered that.

TSELOS: Were there any other things on your first—coming to Ellis Island or that first train trip that you remember for the fir—seeing for the first time, or foods or different kinds of people?

JONES: Well, except that, you know, the—Ellis Island was so big, that—and there were so many people in that room. But we were all kind of separated with r—these ropes.

TSELOS: Where did you stay wh—at Ellis Island when you stayed overnight? Because you were there for several days.

JONES: Yes. Well, there was a great big room with cots, just like in that picture. Cots, and we all stayed in the cots. And my brother had to go w—with all the men to empty the ship. And th—and then I heard that that was the last trip that ship ma—made.

TSELOS: How was the food at Ellis Island? You said that they fed you while you were here.

JONES: Yes. Well, we all sat in a great big long table and then they just passed, you know. And it looked like it was very go—well, to us it was good because we didn't have very much in—in Italy, you know. So we gobbled it. Even I—yeah, I remember that.

TSELOS: How was the train trip across the country when you didn't speak any English? Were there other people on the train that—

JONES: Well, there was a couple—

TSELOS: —were able to help?

JONES: Yeah, there were a couple escorts, like, that kind of took care—you know, spoke to us in Italian and back and forth. And they—I remember this fellow. He's a—oh, about 40, you know. And he was like a fl—I remembered him because the only other man like that I knew was my grandfather. And he was a wonderful person. And I never—never did see my father. So he was—he kind of took charge of us, telling us, you know, "Don't do that," and, "Don't do this," you know.

TSELOS: So when your train got out to the West Coast, where did you end up? In San Francisco with your aunt or in Stockton with your father?

JONES: No, when the—when the train—it actually stopped in New York because we were in a building and the train was shooting by us. We thought that was so strange to see this monster. And again, that's when they—when they started examining us. You know, our eyes and ears and—and my brother, they—they said there was something wrong with his eyes. So they were—he was—you know, they were going to send him back.

TSELOS: And what happened?

JONES: Well, and then they—you know, we—they got the—these other two fellows that were kind of in charge of us, talked to them and—and they reexamined him. And anyhow, they decided that he was—he was almost of age, so that they decided that he'd stay with us.

TSELOS: Did he have to go to the hospital or get medical care for his eyes for a while?

JONES: Well, they—they were taking care of it.

TSELOS: So do you remember how long the—did you go, eventually, out to California to the—to your relatives out there?

JONES: Oh, yeah. Well—well, what happened, we—oh, like I say, we had three other aunts. So one of the—they got in touch with one of the aunts in Stockton. And she—she owned a hotel and a restaurant. And so she said, "You know, I can make in—work here. Send them here." So that's what they did. They put us on a train to go to Stockton. And they was—and I—it was a strange experience because the train stopped and we had to get off. And—and this man that was kind of in charge of us says, "Well, your aunt says you should take a cab." There was a ca—a—some kind of a car to go to her house. And I always remembered this so clearly that we got in the cab, all seven of us. And my brother was—had a pocketknife. And he says, "Don't worry. The cab isn't gonna h—the cab driver isn't gonna hurt us because I'm—I've got this pocketknife. And I was always—laughed at that. I thought, 'Gee, that was strange.' You know, he was pretty young. Anyway, when we got there, my aunt was a—a prosperous-looking woman. And she came out and she grabbed that cab driver. She brought him out and she says, "Where he did you take them? The—the station is two blocks down here. They could have walked her." And he had taken us for a big ride.

TSELOS: Oh.

JONES: Boy, she really let him have it. And I—that was always in my mind, you know, that even in America things like that happen.

TSELOS: Well, that still happens sometimes, that—

JONES: Oh, very much so.

TSELOS: —ca—cab drivers will take foreigners coming from—

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: —another country and drive them all around the place to—

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: —get a bigger fare. Happens once in a while. So did you then—

JONES: Oh, so then we stayed and started—in fact, they entered me in a—in the school. But then my Aunt Funyetti came from San Francisco. Now, she was known to us as a pretty well to do woman and a wonderful aunt. So we were happy to see her. And when she seen the condition we were living, we—it wasn't very good because there was too many of us, you know. So we all—all the girls slept in—in two beds. And then my father and my brother slept in another bed, another room. And so when she came and she looked the situation over she says, "This will never do. They're worse here than they were in Italy. So I'm going to do something about it." So my—my sister, big sister, she used to—we used to get together in the evening by the fireplace. And she would tell us what happened, you know, and—and she says, "You know, see, Funyetti's going to do something about us living like this. It's worse than we were in Italy." At least in Italy we had our own bed. But here, all the girls slept together and my father and my brother slept together. So what happened, all of a sudden we got up and we moved to San Francisco. And my mo—my aunt, this aunt bought a piece of property one block from where she lived. And it was two flats. It was a flat—you know, a flat upstairs and a flat downstairs. And she moved us up there and she put us in one flat. And she rented the second flat. And she gave the deed to my father and said, "You pay—pay me as you can." And of course, my father was planning, you know, the girls were all going to work in a cigar factory, Italian cigars. And that's what they did. They went to work there right away.

TSELOS: Did you work there too?

JONES: Oh, no. I was only seven.

TSELOS: Okay.

JONES: I went to school right away. So—but the girls all worked there and he used to give ‘em back 50 cents for stockings. I remember there was always kind of a commotion about that. He picked—he’d take all the money and then he’d give ‘em 50 cents.

TSELOS: Were—were your other sisters or brothers young enough to go to school? Or were they all working and you were the only one in school?

JONES: Me and the two—no, the three—three youngest of us all g—I mean, Adeline, Aug [PH] and me—

TSELOS: Were in school.

JONES: —went to school.

TSELOS: We’re going to stop for one minute. Oh, okay. Oh, I’m sorry. I misunderstood something he was saying. What was school like? How did you find school in terms of—

JONES: Well, my—my—my aunt that brought us to San Francisco in this flat, she got a hold of the school and, you know, introduced us. And so they—they took us right in.

TSELOS: Were there a lot of other Italian children there? Or were you the only ones?

JONES: No, there was a—there was a—there was—in fact, one became my friend. I don’t know what she was. I think she was German or Russian. Anyhow, she became my friend. And I—I liked—I liked school but it was very hard. Very hard, but I liked it. Could I bother you for another drink of water?

TSELOS: Certainly.

JONES: Thank you.

TSELOS: I’ll go get it.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

TSELOS: Okay. You were going to say something about the ship?

JONES: Yes, an incident that will always be in my mind, was my br—it was my seventh birthday, I guess. Anyhow, I had a birthday on the ship and the

captain called me ups—up in his office. And—and he gave me a little cake for my birthday. So I was so thrilled and I carried this cake. And it was very rough. The boat was going like this. And I was carrying this cake and all of a sudden I went over the side. You know, the railing. A wave came and—and there went my cake and me. And—and my—we had—traveling with us was a cousin, Gino. Not traveling with us but he happened to have gotten the ship, same ship. And he was sweet on my oldest daughter—oldest—

TSELOS: Sis—

JONES: —sister. They were friends. In fact, they got married and had two children. But he was going to Chicago with his brothers and we were going to California, you know.

TSELOS: So did you actually fall over the side of the ship?

JONES: I actually went over the railing and he just grabbed me and I just remember that so distinctly, because there went my cake. But—

TSELOS: He saved your life.

JONES: Saved my life. [chuckles] I re—then I realized that and that incident will always be in my memory.

TSELOS: It's quite an experience on your birthday. That's—

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: That's for sure. Saving your life on your birthday.

JONES: That's right.

TSELOS: So did your—you mentioned that this cousin married your sister, your oldest sister, eventually. Did your family—how long did your family, the brothers and sisters, stay together in San Francisco?

JONES: Well, after my aunt bought that property and gave it to my father, well, this—we stayed together until my sisters got married. They found two nice guys that—and they both got married. And one of them moved upstairs in the other flat. So that—those were viv—very vivid, nice memories.

TSELOS: How many years did you go to school?

JONES: I only went to the eighth grade.

TSELOS: And then what did you do after that?

JONES: Went to work.

TSELOS: What kind of work were you doing?

JONES: Well, I—I—I didn't want to go in the—fa—in the—doing the cigars like my sisters. I didn't want to do that. So what I did, I hung around the sisters that had a convent about two blocks from me. I was always there with them, cooking for them, you know, and stuff like that. So they kind of got me little jobs babysitting or—anyway, that—that's what I did.

TSELOS: So you became kind of like a housekeeper and an assistant—

JONES: Right.

TSELOS: —for the convent then?

JONES: That's right. And those were the—my happy days.

TSELOS: Were you there for a long time?

JONES: Well, I was there till I was a teenager, till—they explained everything to me about being a woman and—

TSELOS: Was—was religion—was the religious—were the religious observances in this country similar to the ones that you had had at the church in—

JONES: Italy?

TSELOS: —in Italy?

JONES: N—well, I didn't know so much about 'em in Italy because we—you had to walk to the church. And even though my sisters brought me there, it wa—no, those—this was completely different. This was a convent and there—we were all very close. So I—I owe most of my life, I think, to them. They taught me how to do a woman and—

TSELOS: How long did you stay there helping them?

JONES: Till I was about 15 to 16.

TSELOS: And—and then where did you go?

JONES: Then I—then I moved with one of my sisters that got married. Two of the sisters got married so I moved with one of them.

TSELOS: A—away from San Francisco or—

JONES: No, they I—no. They lived—well, we all—all kind of lived close.

TSELOS: So can you describe to me your life as you became an adult then and—after you moved with your sisters and left the convent?

JONES: Well, I lived with my sisters, it seems forever, until I was a grown woman and dating and—and actually got married real young.

TSELOS: Did you marry somebody Italian or—

JONES: No. You know, really strange. I never wanted to go with an Italian and I never dated an Italian. No, I married an Englishman.

TSELOS: Was that unusual in your family? Did most of your family marry—

JONES: Oh, no. They all—

TSELOS: —Italian people?

JONES: They all married Italians and most of them from our country, from our—our—where we came from. The two of them—the two oldest girls married the—well, the one that married my cousin—I don't know how they did it because they weren't supposed to [unclear] in those days. But anyway, they married and I lived with her for a while. Then I moved and lived with the other sister, you know, just shifted around until I got married myself.

TSELOS: Did they think it was unusual? Were they friend—that you married somebody who was not an Italian? Did they object to that?

JONES: Well, they were unhappy that I wouldn't date. I just didn't want to.

TSELOS: So after you were married, did you—

JONES: Yeah.

TSELOS: —raise a family or did you work outside the—outside the home for a while? Or—

JONES: Oh, yes. But all I did was that kind of work. I mean, I never did anything special. But I always remembered that, being that there was so many

girls and all pretty girls, that the neighbors used to talk, you know, say, “Oh, those girls with no father and no mother. They’re going to go astray.” And, boy, my sister used to always keep us so strict. “We’ve got to show them that that’s not true.” You know, that—“don’t ever disgrace us.” That’s why they just married the first guy that they went out with.

TSELOS: So were you and your sisters, as you got older—I know you had said you married somebody of an English background. But did you—were you and your sisters involved in Italian community affairs—

JONES: Oh—

TSELOS: —through the church? That sort of thing?

JONES: A little. But we were always close, very close.

TSELOS: And you—did most of you stay in the San Francisco area?

JONES: Yes. I was the first one that moved to—on the peninsula.

TSELOS: And what eventually happened to your father? Did he continue living in San Francisco or did he go back to Italy at some point?

JONES: No, he lived there and he married an old bag.

TSELOS: [chuckles]

JONES: And she took him for everything that she could. And then he died.

TSELOS: Was he buried back in Italy? I think I remember you saying that he was buried back there.

JONES: No, my fa—that was my mother.

TSELOS: Oh, that was your mother. Okay.

JONES: No, he was—he died here. But we had a pretty good life, looking back at my age, [chuckles] of course.

TSELOS: So did you and your sisters have any relatives back in Italy that you kept in touch with—

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: —over the years?

JONES: Only I—not me because I—I was too young. But I remember that my si—my mo—my daughter, she—she says, “I’m going to bring you back to where you—I want to see where you were born.” Because I was telling her about my grandmother. And so she said, “I want to see that,” because she—she kept me up in the attic and I—I can only see the outside from getting on the floor and looking through a window. You know, and that—that all affected my daughter. So she says, “I’m going to go and we’re going—I want to see where you lived.” So we did.

TSELOS: Did you find the house?

JONES: We found the house. In fact, we found—it was really strange. We—we got to Lucca and we didn’t know where Masimashinia was. So we got to Lucca and we got a cab and we tol—ask him where Masimashinia—says, “Oh, yeah. I can take you there.” So he took us there. Oh, and when I was in Lucca—yeah, anyhow, he—he put us in his cab and we got to Masimashinia. When I got out I seen this strange, skinny little woman coming—walking up. And all of a sudden she—she says, “Maria, Maria.” And she—and she called my name. I said, “Who are you?” And she was a cousin and she recognized me from the pictures that my sister used to send her.

TSELOS: Oh, that’s amazing.

JONES: It was really very interesting. And my daughter wants to go back.

TSELOS: So the house that you had lived—

JONES: Oh—

TSELOS: —with your grandmother was still there, then?

JONES: Yes. But not the—she had—must have—I think she died of something. But anyway, the house was there and my room was still that and I showed it to—

TSELOS: So you were able to get the—let the new—have the new owner let you in to look at it?

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: That’s great.

JONES: And my daughter was very happy to see what I used to tell her about. She could—you know, she didn't want to believe it because my grandmother was not very nice to me.

TSELOS: So you're the last one of your—of your brothers and sisters that's—

JONES: Alive.

TSELOS: —still alive. Yeah. Well, we're very pleased that you were willing to come and to tell us your story.

JONES: I was happy to.

TSELOS: Was there anything else that you might remember about your family life and so on? Places where you might have worked, for example? A—your daughter mentioned a bakery that you might have worked in.

JONES: Oh, yeah. Then I—that's what I did. I worked in a bakery. Yeah.

TSELOS: And this—this was—you were actually working with the bakers or you were selling—

JONES: No, I was actually working in the factory.

TSELOS: Oh, okay. Was this an Italian bakery or just a—

JONES: No. It was—

TSELOS: No.

JONES: It was a Langendorf [PH].

TSELOS: Oh.

JONES: It's a very famous bakery in California.

TSELOS: So what was it—what was it like working in the factory?

JONES: Well, today, knowing what I know today, it was foolish of me that I didn't do better in school, you know, and—and got myself a better job. But—but I was satisfied because it—it gave me—it made me survive, pay my rent and—

TSELOS: That was before you got married or—

JONES: Before I got married.

TSELOS: How long did you work in the bakery? A couple of—a few years?

JONES: Oh, I'd say 10 years.

TSELOS: Oh, okay.

JONES: Yes, because I continued to work even when I was married.

TSELOS: What did your husband do?

JONES: Oh, my husband was working with cars.

TSELOS: A mechanic?

JONES: Well—

TSELOS: Or he ma—or he worked in a factory that made cars?

JONES: No, he worked—yeah, it was—no, on tires.

TSELOS: Oh. Did you—did you and your family—when you had a family, did you all go to the Catholic Church?

JONES: Well, yes. Three of my fa—sisters were very religious, over religious. We—we've always been Catholics and—

TSELOS: Was your husband a Catholic also?

JONES: No.

TSELOS: Well, is there anything else that you can think of? Any un—unusual stories or aspects of your life that you—that you'd like to include in this story?

JONES: Well, there isn't much more. We—I have—I had two children, a boy and a girl and that girl is taking care of me now. I've been very thankful.

TSELOS: And you're living in Washington, DC now?

JONES: No. I live in California.

TSELOS: Oh, okay. So have you ever been out to the museum here before?

JONES: No.

TSELOS: Have you—have you enjoyed your visit?

JONES: Very much. My daughter's—you know, she's a teacher so she—very interested in everything and she brought me to see everything that's interesting.

TSELOS: Well, it was—must have been very exciting for you to go back to Italy to see where you grew up.

JONES: Well, my daughter, she's just wonderful to me and I enjoyed—we always enjoyed the trip. And I was glad to see that room where I spent so many years and so fearful of my grandmother. I don't know why she was so—my—because her—my uncle—my grandfather was very wonderful, kind man. And this is a funny story but I got to tell you. My grandfather used to work on ol—olive—you know, picking olives and then making oil.

TSELOS: Pressing the olives then—

JONES: Yes.

TSELOS: —for the oil.

JONES: Yes. And—and—and one rainy, rainy night, coming home, he—he went by the nuns—by—by the convent and they wouldn't let him in, you know, because they were all women. And he went down by the river and he fell in the river and drowned.

TSELOS: Oh, that's terrible.

JONES: Yeah, so I always remember that when they were bringing him up on their shoulders—you know, they were carrying him and my grandmother started screaming and she threw herself on a—on a round of manure. And I always—always felt guilty and always went to confession and said how guilty I felt that I was happy that it was manure that she was—fell in and was [laughter]—

TSELOS: Well, that—I can understand how you felt after she'd mistreated you. Well, that was—so your grandfather died while you were still living there?

JONES: Yes. I was—I was old enough to realize, you know, how horrible that was because he was a wonderful man. He used to bring me the oil fresh, crushed, to put on my soup, because he knew my grandmother probably didn't give it to me.

TSELOS: Are there any other stories about the family that—that you can remember that you think would be interesting?

JONES: Not particularly.

TSELOS: Okay. Well, I want to thank you very much for coming here and [unclear]—

JONES: Oh, I think this was a very nice experience for me.

TSELOS: Well, it's been one nice experience for us too. And we will give you a copy of the tape.

JONES: Oh, that would be interesting.

TSELOS: And we will eventually get the tape transcribed and—

JONES: And maybe someday I'll have a grandmother—I'll be a grandmother and give it to my granddaughter.

TSELOS: Well, that's—that's something that we hope you will do. We—people often save these things and we pass them on. So we're very pleased—we're very pleased that you could come and visit the museum and give us this interview.

JONES: And be welcome in America.

TSELOS: Yes, yes. Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Well, I think that's a good place to end the interview and to—I want to thank you for coming here and telling us about your experience. This is George Tselos signing off with Marie Jones—Marie Ranieri Jones on August 10th, the year 2000 for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

JONES: Thank you very much. I enjoyed it.

TSELOS: Thank—

[END OF INTERVIEW]