

**EI-1175**

**SANO HALO**

**BIRTHDATE: MAY 10, 1910**

**INTERVIEW DATE: DECEMBER 26, 2000**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 90**

**RUNNING TIME: 57:25**

**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**

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**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**TURKEY, 1925**

**AGE: 15**

**SHIP: SS BRAGA**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES:**

LEVINE: Today is December 26<sup>th</sup>, the year 2000, and I'm here in Monroe, New York with Sano Halo, who came through Ellis Island in 1925 when she was about 15.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Since we're not sure of the exact birth date.

HALO: No.

LEVINE: We think it was about 15. And she came on the SS Braga and this is Janet Levine for National Park Service. Would you say again, please, your birth date and where you were born in Turkey?

HALO: I—born 1910 in Turkey, 1910. But wait a minute. 19—

LEVINE: May—

HALO: May, May. That's what I meant. [chuckles] [unclear]. May 10, 1910. I was marr—born in Turkey.

LEVINE: And what was the name of the village that you were born in?

HALO: The village, I forgot. But next—next town it was landone [PH], Turkey. It was bigger town. I don't know why I forgot. I don't forget that. But it was big, big, big place, you know. And they were all Greeks. They were all Greeks. They're no Turks among—of the three towns, they were all Greeks.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: So there were the three little kind of villages.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then—

HALO: Two small and one very big town. landone was very big.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Could you describe the little towns and landone from your childhood?

HALO: Well, landone is—has a—a lot of houses. We had a beautiful church that I could remember. We went in Easter Sunday, walked around it with candles. My mother used to make the candles. Everybody brings their own candles, you know. And they make it out of [unclear] honey wax. And they take it with them, little, skinny ones, you know. Yeah. But that town, landone was big place. I could never—you know, it was big. That's all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: The one I born in, there were houses, you know, just like string, you know, all the way up. You know. That's all. There were about 30 houses. No. Yeah, 30 houses at the town I born in.

LEVINE: And when you say way up there, up the mountainside?

HALO: Yeah, they had one here and one there, you know, and all the way up, yeah, on the mountainside. But there wasn't mountain but it's—was good.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And you had a grandfather and a step-grandmother?

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that was on your father's side?

HALO: My father's side, yeah.

LEVINE: And then did you have grandparents on your mother's side?

HALO: I had a grandfather and an uncle from my—my mother's side. But I don't—I remember Grandpa but I don't remember my—my uncle.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: You know, my mother used to talk about it, you know. And my uncle—my grandfather had a stroke and his face was turned on one side. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you know if your grandparents' mother and father, and going back in generations were all from that area?

HALO: I couldn't say. I couldn't say.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: My—my step grandmother, she was from Patza [PH], from another town, another—Patza was—I think it's big place but I don't know.

LEVINE: Near the Black Sea? Is that right?

HALO: Yeah. He married the woman from Patza.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: D—do you remember some of the stories? I—I should probably say here on the tape—

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: —that Mrs. Halo’s daughter, Thea [PH], has written a book called, “Not Even My Name.” And it’s about Mrs. Halo’s—

HALO: Life story.

LEVINE: —life story.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Right. And in it you—you talk about some of the stories your grandfather told you.

HALO: Well, [chuckles] he—he used to—mostly, he—he was talking about the family. And he—he was talking about the kids, you know. Oh, my grandfather [chuckles]—at one time, my—he brought in—he didn’t tell me too many stories but it was in the family. He brought in a calf’s head and told my mother to cook it. And my mother cooked it and my—my—and then [unclear] was famine that time, very bad famine. And my mother, myself, my sister, we went out looking for some kind of—of green—wild, green vegetables to cook. And when we came back my uncle and my aunt ate the good part of the [chuckles]—the head, you know. So that’s the only thing I could remember. But he was very good to me. He gave me a calf. He gave me a calf. He was very good to me.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what was your calf’s name?

HALO: [unclear]—what was it? Mathea [PH]. Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Well, that must have been something for a little girl to have her own calf.

HALO: Yeah. My grandfather loved me. He loved me.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And so what are the things about your town and your village, rather, that you—that you keep in mind as—as having been joyful in your childhood?

HALO: W—when you’re young, you’re always joyful because you do things and everything you do, it’s fun. We used to play with dolls, make our own dolls, make our own shoes on the dolls. We used to make a lot of little things that keep us happy, you know, those days. But I don’t know, you know, and we went out and took the ca—the animals for a walk. You know, we used to go with them and bring them back, take him in a green pasture, you know. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, you were born in 1910 so World War I started in 1914 to '18. Did you have any effects of World War I? Did you, personally, know of anything connected with World War I?

HALO: The only thing I could remember on that is my grandmother had the hope chest. Everybody over there make hope chest and she brought a lot of things. And she didn't want nobody to get in, so used to make things for the children to wear, you know. That's all I remember of that. Yeah. But it was—it was a lot of things. [chuckles] I can't even—you know, when you sit and talk to—you know, it's different than you tell it to someone else, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, what was the fir—what were the first signs that your life was going to change in—in your village when you were—

HALO: Well, my life, what changed when they took us away from our own homes. We had cows. We had hor—not horse—cows. We had dogs. We had land. They had a business of my parents and our own homes. And they took us out and drift us. So that's the only—you know, and—and you think they just pushing you and pushing you away—away from home. And they pushed us very far, very far.

LEVINE: It was the whole village that was being pushed?

HALO: The whole three towns. Three towns.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah, we was walking.

LEVINE: Can you describe what happened to you and other people as—as time went on when you were on this long—

HALO: Well—

LEVINE: —march?

HALO: There was a young boy, maybe around 12, 13 as he was—well, he died and I remember his—he had his legs, when he slept it was cold. And he died like that. And they had to bury him like that. And that got me, you know, thinking of it a lot.

LEVINE: Hmm. Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah. But in the other ways, we just keep pushing us until we came to Deerbecker [PH]. And from Deerbecker we stayed one night one place. And then they drift us far back somewhere when my—my father said, “That’s it.” By then, it was too late. I lost already two sisters, the twins. And we—we came back to this little town and we got in the—broken-down houses was there. We got about as big as a closet—big as a closet and she [voice breaking]—my—my [unclear] slept all on the—six of us on the one—one cover, my father and mother one side and we children the other side.

LEVINE: This is when you separated from the—from the—

HALO: No.

LEVINE: —others?

HALO: Yeah. [unclear]. And my little sister, four or five years old, she said, “I have to go to bathroom.” I took her out twice. Then finally, she fell asleep, I thought. And she was—we fell asleep and woke me up. She was making such a terrible noise. And I said to my mother. I said, “Why she making that noise?” And my mother replied, “She died. She died.” And she died [voice breaking] that night. So left us three children, three children, my brother, my sister and I. [sniffs] So—

LEVINE: Well, [clears throat] what happened after that? After you—you and your mother—

HALO: After that, we stayed in that town, or around there and we went for—my mother said let’s go and see if we could get something to eat, you know. Whatever they give you. Oh, we got up in the morning and they buried my little sister. And then they had—they had to ask how to make fire to cook something, get something from, you know, neighbors. And they said, “It’s no wood, no nothing.” So she said, “You have to use certain kind of wood.” It’s cow’s manure that dried up and you used that. So after we ate little something my father went and got something from neigh—you know, talking to neighbors. He even sold his watch, beautiful watch. And my—my—my mother said, “Come with me.” She said, “Let’s go and look different towns” to see if we could something to eat, you know, to cook and eat. So we went in this little village. Huh, I don’t know if you call it a village; it’s about five families. And a woman sees me and she said, “Why don’t you leave her with us? We’ll take care of her.” And my mother said, “No.” She said, “She’s not my little girl. I can’t give you to”—didn’t want to hurt her feelings. But she kept begging and begging

my mother. So finally, my mother, "Stay here and I'll come. I'll come and see you." She [voice breaking] never came back.

LEVINE: So you stayed with this woman.

HALO: I stayed with the woman and she was all right at the beginning. She never lift her hand on me though to hit me. Never. I can't put her down on that part.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: But she was very abusive person, you know. I was with her and the beginning was all right. My father came and he got tobacco for them and, you know, they were good. And my sister came once but my mother never came. She died right after that. And [sniffs]—and then my father didn't come no more and I'm with this woman and she keep telling me, "Oh, he's n—never going to come back. He ran away." So, anyhow—so my—I stay, you know. Later, I heard my mother died. My father came and told me. And [voice breaking] I couldn't even cry. And I loved my mother dearly and I couldn't cry. Took me weeks before I got into tears. [sniffs]

LEVINE: Would you—what would you say you were—you were kind of numb from just everything?

HALO: [unclear]?

LEVINE: Were you feeling just numb that you were—

HALO: It just, I—couldn't have been my mother died. No, it can't be her. You know, can't be her. So—so—

LEVINE: Did you have anybody who was nice to you when you were in that—in that town?

HALO: The town was nice. The people of the town was nice. She wasn't nice, you know. She was very abusive person. By using, you know—using you like you are dirt under her feet, but she never once lifted her hand on me. So I ran away one time and they—her brother came and took me back. Then the second time I just walked away but came back. The third time, I never looked back. I just keep walking. You come into big city like New York Ci—I mean, and Deerbecker is like New York City, big place with a big wall around it. All around it is a big, high wall. And I got in there. I—I ran away. I almost drowned. [sniffs] Then I went and I ask some young boy how to cross the river. He said to me, "Do you have a penny?" I said no. He said, "Then," he said, "I'll take you across." He

say, “You stay on this side of the water and I stay on that side. Then you give me your hand and if I push you back”—but the water wasn’t that bad. I crossed the river and I went in a big city of Deerbecker looking—needle in a haystack. I don’t know. A woman and her two children. I don’t know where they lived.

LEVINE: Who—who were you looking for?

HALO: This woman that came to visit these people I was living with. They came for picking wheat when they, you know, harvest. They pick wheat, you know. And they go and fix it up and sell it to buy clothes or whatever. So I know the woman and her two—two daughters. More her daughters than her. And I looked for her in big city like Deerbecker. And I looked and I walked back and forth. And all of a sudden, there she was. There’s the mother of the two girls. I said, “Hello.” And she said, “Who are you?” And I said, “I am so and so.” She said, “Oh, she—that woman is crazy. You have to go back.” So, finally, she took me home. She took me home and her daughters was very nice. She said, “No, you don’t—don’t go back.” And I didn’t want to go back there. I slept there that night and I got up in the morning and they put me out and locked the door. I think they gave me about six cents for a loaf of bread you could get [unclear]. And she said—they put me out and I was very, very sick. Very sick. My head was hurting. I needed something to be warmed up and I didn’t have no place. One of the girls heard I was there and she came over. She came over and took me in her house. And I said—I said, “My head hurts so bad.” And she said—she took me to her house, took a pail of water and pour on my head. And I must have fell asleep. And the next day she took me back to these people. Next day—next day, same thing. They locked the door and put me out like a cat. And I’m looking for—I’m sick again. I was sick for a year on this. Every day I had to look for some—so finally, the people, the Armenian people I was with—she went to American doctor. I never heard American anyhow. I didn’t even know what it was. And she said, “I went to him for myself and I ask about you.” [sniffs] She said, “Take—take hot pepper, red hot pepper, rub on her back and take her in Turkish bathhouse.” And I did that. She did that to me and I got better after that. Yeah. Yes.

LEVINE: We’re going to pause here. [tape off/on]

HALO: So the—they locked the door and put me out. The third day, a next-door neighbor was pregnant and she said, “I have one child and I’m going to have another. Would you come and live with me—with us?” Her husband, the child, her mother, you know. And who am I to say no? So I went to live with them and I—

LEVINE: This was an Armenian family?

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

HALO: And then—then, now, we are there. Again, the Turks want them out—out of the—America. I mean, over there. They can't stay in Turkey. So now, they went someplace. We took pictures. But I'm—I'm again thinking, "What are going to happen to me?" And the neighbor saw me and she says, "Sano, what's wrong with you?" She say, "You look very sad." I say, "I'm all right. I'm all right." You know. "Here, come on. Tell me what it is." I told her. I said, "They're going to go away. What are going to happen to me?" She said, "What do you mean, what are going to happen to you? They're going to take you with them. Run upstairs to talk to them." And they said, "Yeah, we taking her with us. If anybody come, her family or her get married," they have to pay for me. [chuckles] So that's how Pop came and [chuckles] and I got married. He paid them. I don't know if he made—he always said, "I paid hundred dollars for you." [laughs] So—so, you know. So that's the way. So he marry—I mean, I'm married now.

LEVINE: Well—well, wait. So you went—you left that town with the family?

HALO: What? Excuse me?

LEVINE: Did you leave that town with the family?

HALO: No, then I came to [unclear] Syria with them. No, I didn't leave them. They brought me along. They brought me to [unclear], Syria. And I was there with them and I went to look for—somebody needed a girl so I went to look. And they came back and took me back. They said, "No, no. She's our daughter. We want her here." So then—

LEVINE: And how did they treat you?

HALO: They were pretty good. You know, in every—even your own mother doesn't treat you perfect all the time. So we had little—you know, but nothing to—to put down, really. You know. But we were good together. And I married from their home. Married.

LEVINE: Did you feel safe when you were with that family?

HALO: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: They never abused me. They never pushed me. They never—you know, they—the grandmother, she's little, you know, tough. But if you talked to her grandchildren they said she had treated them the same. So, you know. So it's no—you know. But I—I—they brought me all the [unclear], Syria.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: And—

LEVINE: And how did your husband—how did you happen to meet your husband?

HALO: Oh, I—I lived in this place and he had family living downstairs, cousins, distant cousins or something. He kept in touch with them for years, you know. So when they came down—downstairs—he was—lived upstairs. You know, one room upstairs. And the woman downstairs said to her—to—to him, rather—he says—he said, "I'm looking for a woman to get married." So he said, "Why don't you marry that young girl?" So that's how we met was downstairs. He sat on the stairway to hold my hand and I wouldn't let him [chuckles] hold it. I ran upstairs, you know. I never sat with him. I never hold hands with him. I never talk to him and I marry—we marry—got married. So—and he spoke my language and I spoke his, you know. Yeah, he spoke Arabic and I spoke Arabic. I learned the language.

LEVINE: Did—did you marry him against your own will?

HALO: No.

LEVINE: No.

HALO: No, no. It was just getting married; that's all. You know. I never thought of it against my will. I thought against anything. It's just that sometime I think when you were—when you are young you want to be just you. And I got away from under somebody else's hand. But they were good to me. I couldn't say they were bad. They were very good. Good people. But the nieces—her children are here. One of them died about 15 years ago.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

HALO: But we still get in touch. Yeah.

LEVINE: So what happened after you got married then?

HALO: We got married. We went—we came to America. [chuckles] My husband—we was in Beirut, Syria and he said, "Do you—would you stay

here and come later? I go and you come later.” Well, I don’t know nothing to—you know, to travel. I said, “No. I won’t come,” I said, “if you leave me.” So he stayed. He stayed and brought me to America. Yeah, brought me to—he tried to teach me how to read one time. And he tells me, of course, and I don’t know the language, you know. So he slapped me in the face and then he said—he—after we took and we went to neighbor’s house—some friend that he knew. And she—she readed my tea leaf. [laughs] And I said, “I bet you,” I said, “I get to America.” And then was—[laughs] and I came—come here. Yeah, I came.

LEVINE: How did you feel about coming to America when you realized that that’s what you were going to do?

HALO: To me, I don’t know. I couldn’t say, really.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HALO: No. But when I came to New York there was—there was—the kids was ice skiing—no, no, no. Skates. You know, [unclear]—

LEVINE: Roller-skates.

HALO: You know, roller-skates. And I used to watch them, how they do that, you know. And they used to go, move [unclear]. And the big buildings, you know. After that, was just normal life, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, could you say anything about getting to the port? Where did you leave from? Do you remember?

HALO: I left from Beirut, Syria.

LEVINE: And do you remember anything about the voyage?

HALO: No, [chuckles] just—you know, just coming. The only thing I remember was I watched the—used to watch the water a lot, you know. [unclear] [laughs] in the water. But no, nothing—nothing excite—we was—when he got—when he got the boat, he took me downstairs and it was full of beds. And he said, “Sano.” Said, “This is where we’re going to sleep.” And I looked around all the beds and I said, “No, I won’t. I won’t sleep there.”

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: This was down in steerage—

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: —in the boat. Uh-huh.

HALO: So I—I went up—so I said, “I will not sleep down here.” “I don’t care,” I said. So he went and told the captain. He gave us a cabin, you know, for us. Yeah. But it was—it was good voyage. Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: And so what happened? Then you—you—where did you settle after you—do you remember anything about Ellis Island before you got to—

HALO: Well, to me, it just was Ellis Island. I didn’t hear the name. I didn’t know the name then. And we had to write our name to get off the—you know, out of the station, whatever.

LEVINE: Right.

HALO: The only thing, I had to do this for my name.

LEVINE: Put your thumb—

HALO: I didn’t know how to write then. [chuckles] And then when we finished, of course, I don’t know. Some way, they saw some—something on my legs and they asked me what that was for. [coughs] I had—

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

HALO: You know?

LEVINE: Two scars.

HALO: Yeah, yeah. It was—I was outside when it happened many years ago. [coughs] And then—then, when—when we got out, we finished and Pop says, “Let’s go.” He said, “Before they find something wrong.” [chuckles] And that was it. And we came to the city. We met—we—we stay with this woman. She had a room for us. She was one of those women that rents room.

LEVINE: A boarding house.

HALO: Boarding house.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: And then after we then settled there we went up looking for his son. He had nine-year-old, almost 10-year-old son. And then his brother was with us and I didn't know who he was. And I said—after he left, I said, “Who was that?” He said, “My brother.” Too late. [chuckles] Yeah, that's the way we came to America.

LEVINE: Wow.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: So how long did you stay in that boarding house then?

HALO: Oh, about a month or a little more than a month. Then he went and found a room, 19—17<sup>th</sup> Street. This was 19. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, he found apartment. Those days, you could get apartment anytime.

LEVINE: Can you tell of those first—that first month when you were in the boarding house, how you felt or any things that—that struck you?

HALO: It was just a bed, one bed. And then we went downstairs to eat. That's the only thing I remember of—nothing more than that.

LEVINE: Were people nice to you? Did you feel—

HALO: Yeah, they were very nice. What was her name? Cameli—what'd I say was her name? Anyhow, she was very nice and she even told my husband. She says, “You must be from a rich family or a very well family,” I think she said. “She's very good person,” you know, meaning me. So that's—[chuckles] well, we didn't stay too long with her.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: You know.

LEVINE: And what was your husband doing then for work when he—

HALO: He used to do roofing, sidewalks. Used to do a lot of sidewalk and roofing. You know, fix roofs. He used to do carpenter work, anything. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. And I guess he had been here for a while before you went back and married.

HALO: Oh, he was, I think, 20 years. Twenty years. He came 1905. 1905, he came to America.

LEVINE: And he had gone back to—to Syria especially to find a wife? Is that—

HALO: Yeah. He went once before too but this time he brought a wife with him. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, your husband was not Greek, right?

HALO: No. He's a Syrian, you know. Yeah.

LEVINE: And his family, were they from this—

HALO: Mine is Greek.

LEVINE: Yours is Greek and his family—

HALO: Yeah, but they don't call us Greek. They call us Room. [PH]

LEVINE: Room.

HALO: Yeah, they don't call us Greek at that time. You know, at that time. Yeah.

LEVINE: So your husband's family, where were they—were they originally from Syria?

HALO: Who?

LEVINE: Your husband's family?

HALO: Yeah. No, they were from Turkey.

LEVINE: Oh, they were from Turkey too.

HALO: They were from Turkey too. Yeah. Yeah, they were from Turkey.

LEVINE: Let's see. So—so you moved on your own and—and then you—you were in New York. And did you—did you adjust to New York? Did you feel comfortable?

HALO: Well, I felt comfortable because I didn't know no better. [chuckles] Yeah. I—I—I joined in, you know, [unclear]. I had—my husband was with me. I became a married woman, you know, so that was good. Yeah.

LEVINE: So it's—it's—It's as though it was something of a comfort to you to be a married woman and—

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: —and have a—

HALO: To g—it's—the comfort is you get away from under somebody else's thumb. You are—become you, not somebody else.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: You know, yeah.

LEVINE: And—and what happened to the memories that you had of all the tragic things that you had experienced once you got here and you were a married woman?

HALO: [chuckles] Married woman. Then I had a child and then I had a child and then I had work, work and work to keep him going. Yeah, that's where was my life, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah. I raised 10 children. I didn't have no aunts and uncles. I didn't have no mother and father. He didn't had none. So we were just the two of us raised the two—all the 10 children.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow.

HALO: Yeah, that was it.

LEVINE: Did you—during—during that time when you were raising your family, did you—did you—did you dwell on your past?

HALO: No.

LEVINE: Did you think about it much or—

HALO: No.

LEVINE: No.

HALO: I thought of my family, yes. Many time and all the time. I still do.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: I still do.

LEVINE: Did—did you think you would go back one day? Was that something that was on your mind or—

HALO: Yeah, but finally, my daughter did it for me, took me to Turkey.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: And I liked it, you know. Go back just to look. Nothing exciting but was good.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Just to back up a minute, w—what was your husband's name?

HALO: Abraham.

LEVINE: And can you—can you tell your children's names? Maybe in the order of their birth? The oldest first.

HALO: The oldest is Mari—Mariam [PH]. Do I have to [unclear]?

LEVINE: You don't have to. [chuckles] No, if you just want to say—

HALO: What you say? [unclear]. Yeah, I think that's [unclear].

LEVINE: Okay. Let's see. So—so when you went back to Turkey, did—did that heal some of the wounds that you had?

HALO: I didn't get that.

LEVINE: When you went back to Turkey with your daughter.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did—did that help heal some of the wounds that you had?

HALO: No, I don't think so.

LEVINE: No, uh-huh.

HALO: No, I don't think so.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HALO: Because I didn't find the place.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: So that's where it is.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. And how about—do you think of yourself as—as American? As—

HALO: I do.

LEVINE: You do?

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: I am an American. I am—I became an American, 1945.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: And I—my children all born here and I love America.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: I love it. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how do you—how do you put together the—the—sort of the side of you that's Greek and the side of you that's American? How—how do you think about your Greek heritage?

HALO: Well, I still—I am Greek no matter. I born Greek. So I'm still Greek no matter if I'm in America or in Turkey or Russia. But I still—I am what I am. You never give that up.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: You know, you never give that up. That's your herit—heritage, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: So you don't give it up.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And how about the fact that—that, you know, your daughter has written this book and it tells your story very fully? And has that made a difference in some way to y—

HALO: Well, it make lot of difference because she had—she done it just for me. And she done a good job. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

HALO: That's what it is.

LEVINE: Yeah. I mean, it—because it sounds as though it was something that you didn't really think of that much [unclear]—

HALO: I always—if I—I said one time—I said, "If I knew how to read"—I said, "If I knew how to read and write I should have wrote my own story myself."

LEVINE: Huh.

HALO: You know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

HALO: But I never been to school.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: So you were—you were happy that your daughter could—could do it for you.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Very happy.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Somebody cared to do it.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HALO: Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: How—how about your personality? Can you—can you say anything about how you changed from the kind of, let's say, temperament you had as a little girl and then going through the ordeal you went through? How—how did you change inside? Could you say anything about that?

HALO: I—I don't think I changed at all. I am still the way I am. I think same way. I talk the same way and I [chuckles] live the same way.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: I know in the book you said something about that if you see something you—you know whether or not you can do it.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Master it. Was that always true from the time you were a little girl?

HALO: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I—I could do many things, just to look at it. Of course, not writing though. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: You know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah. Well, I used to—I learned how to wri—read too, you know, in American language.

LEVINE: Did you—did you go to night school or something—

HALO: No.

LEVINE: —like that when you became a citizen?

HALO: I went one time, well, way back in '60s couple weeks and I stopped because there were all—all Italians. None of them know how to read or read at all. And I felt that I was just with the wrong people.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

HALO: So I didn't go back.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. [clears throat]

HALO: Yeah.

WOMAN: Can we stop?

LEVINE: Yeah. We're going to pause here. Just this last part, that the Italian people in that group couldn't—

HALO: N—couldn't—

LEVINE: —speak English either.

HALO: No, they were good people.

LEVINE: Yes.

HALO: N—nothing wrong with them. They just didn't speak English to—so we could get together and read, you know.

LEVINE: Right.

HALO: And it was [chuckles] the—the—the teacher was—his name Gallo [PH], Mr. Gallo. And he said to me—he knew I was—could read better, you know. He tells everybody to read. And he says to me, “I want you to read this—this page,” you know. So—and he say, “I’m going to walk—I’m going to go away.” He said, “But I want you to read it anyhow.” So he goes and gets his pr—at somebody higher than him. And behind me listening me what, how I read. And he loved the way [chuckles] I read it, you know. Then after that I didn’t go no more. I meet him on—on—in—in street, you know. And he said, “Mrs. Halo.” He say, “You don’t go no more to school.” He said, “That’s not for you.” He said, “You better go this other school,” but it is too far at night. I couldn’t go at night and even in—in Brooklyn. Yeah. So I didn’t go no more.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: So I [unclear] been to school. You know, about three weeks. I went three weeks, about. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah, I became a [chuckles]—a teacher. Yeah. No, that’s a joke. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HALO: So that’s how I, you know—yeah, I went to school. Three weeks. Yeah. Once a week, three—three weeks.

LEVINE: Yeah.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: So just having raised 10—10 children is—is quite a—is quite a—a—a task.

HALO: What?

LEVINE: I guess, h—how—how did you manage it all?

HALO: Good question. [chuckles] I don’t know. It just comes. You do the best you can. That’s all. You know? What can you do to manage? I didn’t have nobody, no aunts, uncles or anybody. Just had the family, you know. It comes. You take care of them. I could remember people used to count them when I walked in the park, you know. But that’s the way it is, you know. And, you know, you don’t think of those things. You don’t think of—it’s your children. You take care of ‘em. That’s what. You know. That’s how I thought.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: And nobody ever told me different neither. Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you remain religious in this country? Did you keep the—the Greek Christian—Christian religion here?

HALO: Over here?

LEVINE: Mmm.

HALO: No, no. I never [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: No.

LEVINE: And—and what would you say has given you great satisfaction in your life?

HALO: I think everything I done, it gave me satisfactory—satisfaction. Everything I done was mine. I done it. If I didn't, that was it. So it's no—I—I can't say something [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: You know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

HALO: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Do you want to pause here?

HALO: Huh?

LEVINE: Okay.

HALO: And when I was young, we went, you know, the family. But when I was—I didn't go no place special, the churches. We had a church that—for the kids, for the children. They gone to church, all of them and they—every one of them got a Bible, every one of them. After seven years, they got a Bible. I don't know what happened, all the Bibles, but got a Bible. A Greek church, I didn't go since I left home with my parents. I didn't see any around that I could go and I didn't have time. I didn't have

time, you know. I never forgot my—the Lord's Prayer, a Greek—a Greek since I was a little girl that my grandfather taught us. You know. So my religion is with God; that's all. You don't have to be in a church to pray. You could pray in your own home, you know.

LEVINE: So you kept—you kept your prayers but you—

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: But you didn't—uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, is there anything else you can think of related to coming to this country and making a whole new life here—

HALO: Mmm, no.

LEVINE: —that [unclear]—

HALO: I raised 10 children so [laughs] I think that's good enough.

LEVINE: Yeah, I think—

HALO: And this is America and this—we love it, all its—every day of life, you know. Yeah. And I get up early in the morning every day and I go to bed late at night. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: Yeah. Yeah, it's—it's beautiful life. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay.

HALO: Prayer.

LEVINE: Okay, this is the Lord's Prayer.

HALO: [speaking in foreign language]. Amen.

LEVINE: Now—

HALO: That—that's—that's a prayer.

LEVINE: Is that—

HALO: That's a Greek prayer.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

HALO: You know. I don't know the part that said, "The Father, the Son and Holy Ghost." I forgot that part. But I said—I said the prayer and I—I get it that way at the end. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about in Turkish? What—do you read—

HALO: No, Turkish I don't know. The only thing I—Turkish is—the song. I know some songs. Yeah.

LEVINE: Would you want to sing a little bit?

HALO: Yeah. Well, let's see. It's one. It's Christmas that's in—in—in Greek language. Christmas song.

LEVINE: Oh.

HALO: [singing in Turkish]. That is—that, they sing it at the Christmas song. I used to think it was Easter but it's Christmas.

LEVINE: Oh.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

HALO: Then it's in Turkish I have a—a—my father used to sing, "[singing in Turkish]." That's in Turkish. It's not all there but part of it. Yeah.

LEVINE: Is that a song—do you know what that one's about?

HALO: I really couldn't say. It's—this other one I know little bit more, the name. [speaking foreign language] means a bird that flies in the sky—in my—in my thinking. And it tries—it doesn't care. It wants to go and drink cold water and that's the song of it. [singing in Turkish]. It's a bird, I think. To my thinking, it's a bird—[singing] and fly in a blue sky. And it's not going to come back where he started. He's going further away to drink cold water, to my thinking. That's what that is. Yeah. It's—yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Thank you. Maybe just a—a last question about, considering everything you experienced in your life, is there anything that you can say about human nature or how you've made sense of—of people and— and life and the world and—

HALO: Well, you know, when you talk to the people and they kind to you, understanding, you make—we become friends. When a person is just to be—want to know about you but doesn't care to know you that much, you stay away from them. But I—I don't have that kind of people. I have [unclear] gone, you know. But I have no bitterness in me. I don't have no bitterness in me, what people did, even the Turks. I don't have no bitterness against them. It's too late. It's gone. It's finished. It been buried. That's how I look at it. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, thank you so much for this interview.

HALO: Thanks.

LEVINE: I've been speaking with Sano Halo, who came from Turkey in 1925 when she was 15 years of age.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And maybe just a little end of—how you—you said you were 17. Do you want to say [unclear]—

HALO: Seventeen, because they had a—they said—he said to them, "She's 15. You can't do that. You can't marry at 17; has to be"—I mean, "Can't marry her, 15." So they had to put my age, 17. But listen, just we turn off that. I didn't have no—

LEVINE: Should I turn this off?

HALO: Yeah. [tape off/on]

LEVINE: I just want to say in closing that the book, [clears throat] which—which has now been published by Thea Halo, tells more completely the story that you've just—

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: —talked about and it fleshes out a lot of parts of it that, of course, we couldn't—

HALO: Well, you always—you write a book, it's kind of a—a—you never can get it just the way it is.

LEVINE: Right, right. But it's an approximation.

HALO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And—and also, I think in the future that book will be in the Ellis Island Library. And in the future, I would like to interview Thea also about—about writing the book. Okay. I want to—I want to just say that the book has been published by St. Martin's Press and is—is available. Okay. We're closing here. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]