

EI-1220

M. SPADALINI

BIRTHDATE:

INTERVIEW DATE:

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW:

RUNNING TIME:

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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ITALY

AGE: 8

SHIP:

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

SPADALINI: Then we went to Naple.

LEVINE: So you went all the way to Naples by wagon?

SPADALINI: Yeah, wagon.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything that you or your mother brought with you to come to America?

SPADALINI: I guess we didn't bring much. We couldn't bring too much, you know, at the time. So—and—

LEVINE: And how did—how did—do you—can you remember, as a little eight-year-old, how—

SPADALINI: Yes.

LEVINE: —you felt or thought about coming to this country?

SPADALINI: I didn't know where I was going to. [chuckles] Well, don't know where I was going to, you know. All we know, we were going to America. [chuckles] That's—I think my brother could tell you more about that, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Well, I know the trip was not too good. It took us a whole month to get here and we had bad weather on the boat on the way. And the waves came over the top of the deck of the boat and it was rocking and rocking. It was really bad. We had a couple of days bad weather. And I remem—I—I remember the people all praying in the boat. And I happened to sneak—to go upstairs on the deck. And my brothers came after me to bring me downstairs because the water was—the—the waves were terrible. That's what I remember about it. And then I remember that we stopped in Rock of Gibraltar and the people throwing money down. And I seen, like, men and women going after the—the money in the water. That's what—

LEVINE: Diving under for it.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPADALINI: That's what I remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Why don't you mention, for the tape, the name of the ship.

SPADALINI: The name?

LEVINE: The name of the ship.

SPADALINI: Our Robert [PH]. That's what I remember was Our Robber.

LEVINE: Okay.

SPADALINI: That's the name of the ship. It was at the time.

LEVINE: Wow. Do you remember when the ship came into the New York harbor?

SPADALINI: Yes, that's when my—when we got into the harbor my father and my uncle sent us the basket of fruit upstairs, up—you know, threw the rope down and they brought the basket up. But we couldn't get out

because it was New Years Eve or New Years Day and they weren't letting anybody out of the boat. So that's how we happened to come—

LEVINE: Oh.

SPADALINI: Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So—so you had to stay in the boat on the ship for a while?

SPADALINI: Yeah, until they let us off and then it was [unclear]. Ellis Island, we stayed here a few days, you know, going through all the routines, as I remember.

LEVINE: Do you remember the accommodations on the ship?

SPADALINI: Yes, there was bunk beds, like, up and down, you know. That's where we slept.

LEVINE: Were you in a cabin or were you in a big, sort of a dormitory place? Can you remember that?

SPADALINI: Oh, I remember there was other people there too.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: You know.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPADALINI: Other friends of ours that came with us. We—they were all together.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So you got to Ellis Island. And what do you remember about inspections or—or what Ellis Island looked like to you or—

SPADALINI: I remember being in a big, big room and we was out there. They gave us bread. I don't know what else, if it was jelly or what on the bread or whatever. But they gave us a big loaf of bread with the—with all of us kids there. [chuckles] I guess we were hungry, you know. And that's what I remember about Ellis Island was the big, big room and there was a lot of people there.

LEVINE: And do you remember any of the inspection?

SPADALINI: Yes, I think I do remember that. I always used to comb my hair, tied back and I had two braids. And she made sure that head was clean and all that, you know, that we'd wash ourself and all that stuff.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPADALINI: And that's about all I remember about—then when I remember getting out.

LEVINE: Can you describe yourself as an eight-year-old girl when you came to this country? How would you describe what you were like?

SPADALINI: Well, I—when I come out—come out, my—my uncle and my father came to take us. And the first place we stopped was at one of my—well, it was my grandfather's—oh, what was he now? The nephew. I think it was his nephew that had a—a shoe shine place—

LEVINE: Oh.

SPADALINI: In Williamsburg. And that was the first thing, that we stopped in his store before we got to the house.

LEVINE: Do you remember what transportation you took, what—

SPADALINI: Ah—

LEVINE: First of all, who—who me—why don't you describe the meeting with your father—

SPADALINI: Oh.

LEVINE: —and—and it was your uncle too?

SPADALINI: Yes. He came to meet us at the place and I don't remember how we got there. I remember walking part of the way. I don't know—I don't remember how we got there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember when your father came to Ellis Island?

SPADALINI: Yes, to pick us up.

LEVINE: What was that like?

SPADALINI: It was emotion to see him, you know, because she hadn't seen him for three years. And when you see them you sort of—and then we got home and we—to see my sisters, all they do—hugging me and kissing me. And he lived in a two—two-room apartment that all my brothers had to go to sleep over the aunt's house, the cousins. They all took some of the boys in. That's what I remember [unclear].

LEVINE: Were you closest to any particular family member? Any of the other children?

SPADALINI: I think I was closest, most of all, to my brothers and sisters.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPADALINI: Yes, we were a very close family.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. So how about first impressions? Those first few days and weeks when you were in this country? Do you remember things that struck you in particular that were new to you?

SPADALINI: I remember it was cold. I remember my cousin sent a sweater for me to wear at that time and then she told me to keep it. And I didn't go out much because I was small. And I was around the house with my two sisters, which I loved them very much—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: —and they took care of me. And—and we had to—they had to look for a big house and they did look for a bigger house. And we got a house and they moved maybe about a mile away from where we were living. We used to walk and we got a house right in front of the school. And I remember a friend, Vallis, [PH] came over and he brought me to—to [unclear] to be in school.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And I remember my first teacher's name, Mrs. Rodge [PH]. She was a beautiful woman. She had red hair. And of course I couldn't speak English and it was hard for me to understand then.

LEVINE: Her name was Rodge?

SPADALINI: Mrs. Rodge, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: She was married.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Wow. And had you been in school in Italy?

SPADALINI: No.

LEVINE: Oh, so this was the first—

SPADALINI: First, right.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. How is learning English for you?

SPADALINI: Well, I guess it was a little harder at the beginning, you know. But I guess I start learning it. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah, huh. Uh-huh. And so did your brothers all start school too? Were they school age?

SPADALINI: Yes, they all started school.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Yes. Like, they all brought 'em up to register in school, this friend of ours, Mr. Tomeka [PH]. I remember his last name. And he took care of us, go to school, you know, register. They went to the boys school and I was at the girls school.

LEVINE: Was it a parochial school that you went to?

SPADALINI: No, it was a—

LEVINE: No. Public school?

SPADALINI: —public school.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And did your father know English by the time you got here? And how—was he able to—

SPADALINI: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: —communicate or—

SPADALINI: Maybe a little bit.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: Not much, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: But—

LEVINE: And what was he doing then?

SPADALINI: I don't remember.

LEVINE: You don't remember.

SPADALINI: I don't know what kind of work he was doing, really.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. And were—were there a lot of other immigrant children in your school with you? Do you remember? Were there other children who couldn't speak English? Do you—

SPADALINI: I couldn't remember that. No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And—and no, I couldn't speak. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Well, this Mrs. Rodge—

SPADALINI: She—

LEVINE: Was she—was she very helpful to you as far as learning English?

SPADALINI: Yeah, they try, you know, and try as time goes by.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: Took time.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. So did you go right into kindergarten or first grade, or do you remember?

SPADALINI: Gee, I don't remember the class it was.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: It wasn't kindergarten, I know. It was where you learn to read or write, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: And let's see. Wh—what—how did your—can you think about ways your life changed, just for a little girl at that point in time? The differences—

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —in—in your life here versus what it had been.

SPADALINI: Well, I know it was very cold that winter and I remember that my father had to buy a coat for me. And we went down Manhattan Avenue there. It was all the stores there. And he was saying to me, "If you like the coat, you say yes. If you don't like the coat, say no." [chuckles] He told me that. And that's what we did, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Until he got the coat that I liked and he bought me the coat.

LEVINE: Wow.

SPADALINI: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Well, you were the only little girl because the—your sisters—

SPADALINI: Small.

LEVINE: —were older.

SPADALINI: Yeah, yes.

LEVINE: Ri—so you must have gotten a lot of attention when—you think you were spoiled, being the only little girl?

SPADALINI: No, I don't think so.

LEVINE: No?

SPADALINI: No, I wasn't spoiled.

LEVINE: No, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: It's a big family. It was hard, you know.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

SPADALINI: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So in your neighborhood in Brooklyn—

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —were there a lot of people who had come from Italy?

SPADALINI: Well, we lived within maybe about a mile. A lot of people, they came with us, friends of ours, best friends of my—my father too, you know. And they got to see one another, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: And his best friend got killed.

LEVINE: How did that happen?

SPADALINI: He was working on the docks and he fell in the river and couldn't survive. He—he passed away.

LEVINE: Wow.

SPADALINI: He was a wonderful man, a good looking man too. And he had five children.

LEVINE: Do you think your mother and father were happy they had come to this country?

SPADALINI: I think so. I think so.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: My mother came because of my brothers. They—she didn't want them to go to the war. That's why.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPADALINI: She wanted to get here to bring my brothers here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So that was 1920.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So [clears throat] let's see. And then you said three years later you sent for your grandfather?

SPADALINI: Grandfather, yes. Yes.

LEVINE: And what was it like seeing him again?

SPADALINI: Oh, God. When he—were all waiting for him, you know. And I seen him up in this—the street. I ran—ran, got a hold of his legs because he was a big man. And, oh, it was just like seeing your father again, you know, because he really took care of us too, you know, lived together.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: He's a wonderful man.

LEVINE: I imagine he was happy to be here.

SPADALINI: Oh, yes. Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And then he took up his role of storyteller again—

SPADALINI: Ah, yeah.

LEVINE: —in this country?

SPADALINI: In this country, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Yeah. [unclear].

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPADALINI: And all the relatives all came over to my father's house to see him, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Which they were the nieces and nephews, you know. So it's wonderful.

LEVINE: So you had a big family then—

SPADALINI: Yes.

LEVINE: —in this country by then?

SPADALINI: Yes, we had a big family.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: We were 10.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Wow. Wow.

SPADALINI: Or they had 10 children. She had a set of twins that passed away and then eight children.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: Five boys and three girls.

LEVINE: Did she have her children in the house in this country as well?

SPADALINI: Not here. She had no children here. They were all born in Italy.

LEVINE: Oh, they were all born in Italy.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Okay.

LEVINE: Okay. We're going to pause here and turn the tape over.

SPADALINI: Okay.

LEVINE: And then we'll keep going.

SPADALINI: All right.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: Okay, we're continuing here.

SPADALINI: Okay.

LEVINE: So you started in school.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: And did you—did you like school?

SPADALINI: Yeah, although I didn't understand at the beginning, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: But I tried, you know. My parents couldn't understand it either because, spoke Italian. It was a little hard, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And we lived—then my father bought a house so that—

LEVINE: Where was that?

SPADALINI: In—in Brooklyn also.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And he bought a house on Metropolitan Avenue. We lived in that house for a couple of years and then we moved to a bigger house. And we had upstairs and downstairs. We had a living room downstairs, the kitchen. And we had a bedroom for my grandfather and another spare room and then upstairs we had the bedrooms, three bedrooms.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you have a sense that the family was moving up?

SPADALINI: I—

LEVINE: —in—was that something that—

SPADALINI: I guess I—

LEVINE: —you thought of?

SPADALINI: —didn't think—think about that at all, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: I don't know where I was going because I was small, you know.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And then I had to walk to school, which—maybe about four or five blocks—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: —to go to school from where we moved to, you know.

LEVINE: Yeah. And—

SPADALINI: Huh.

LEVINE: —do you remember kind of when you realized you really knew English and you were—

SPADALINI: Oh, it was—

LEVINE: —able to get along well and—

SPADALINI: Oh, yeah. Then I start going and I had f—I met friends in the neighborhood, you know, became friends with them. And we started talking, you know. And they would say, "Say it this way. Say it that way."

LEVINE: Were these children who had also come from Italy or they were children—

SPADALINI: No, no. They were here.

LEVINE: They were born here.

SPADALINI: They were born here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So they hel—helped you—

SPADALINI: Yes.

LEVINE: —just in playing with them, they h—

SPADALINI: Right, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Do you remember what you did for fun here as a little girl?

SPADALINI: Oh, we used to play, make checks on—on the ground—on the sidewalk.

LEVINE: Hopscotch.

SPADALINI: Hops—[laughter] hopscotch.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPADALINI: We used to play that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And of course, we had the big family. We always mostly stayed inside a lot, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: Big family.

LEVINE: Did you—were you kind of the go-between between your parents and—and other people? Because you probably learned English faster than—

SPADALINI: Oh.

LEVINE: —they did.

SPADALINI: Yeah. Yeah, we all learned—all my brothers, we all learned a little, you know. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: What do you remember most about those days wh—when you were just getting adjusted to—to this country?

SPADALINI: I remember we had a very bad winter. I remember all the snow and ice. And we had to go to school and we'd try to walk on the ice. It was very hard.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: And then I met friends. These girls also went to school with me and—and we visited one another as we got big. You know, they lived near me. And we became good—very good friends with them and happened to marry when I got older. [laughter] Marry the brother. He came from Vermont. He lived there for a while in Vermont.

LEVINE: Now, this was a brother of a friend of yours?

SPADALINI: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: We became friends with them.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So how long did you stay in school?

SPADALINI: Till the eighth gra—eighth grade.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: I felt I was too old to be, at the time, you know. And my mother needed me home too to help her with the house and my sisters. And they—when my sisters got married and I was of age, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: That's what I remember.

LEVINE: And how—do you remember when you met your husband? How you met him?

SPADALINI: Well, we were close friends. I'd confirmed two of his sisters. And I was in Connecticut when he came to propose to me. But I didn't see him. My girlfriend went to church early and she says, "There's a card downstairs." She described it to me and I says, "Oh." And I didn't go to mass that morning with her. I went to a later mass. And he waited outside and he saw my uncle in the window. He got—looked at him and he says, "Oh, I don't think it's—going to enjoy this if I go in and ask for her." So he went home. He went back home. And then the sister called me. I called the sister, now. I called the sister because

we kept in touch. And she says, “My brother wants to talk to you.” So he talked to me and he says, “I came there to see you.” [chuckles]

LEVINE: But you knew him before—

SPADALINI: Yes, I knew—

LEVINE: You [unclear]—uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: Yeah. I knew him—

LEVINE: Okay.

SPADALINI: —through my girlfriends. But I didn’t know that he was inter—

LEVINE: You didn’t know he was inter—that interested.

SPADALINI: Yeah. [laughter]

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: This was after we got through with school, you know. My brothers got married and, just like we all started getting married. That was it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Mmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So you—you—you felt sure you wanted to say yes?

SPADALINI: No, not at the beginning. I wasn’t too sure. I thought I was too young yet.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: [laughs]

LEVINE: How old were you?

SPADALINI: Oh, I—when I got married I was almost 22 years old.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: At the time.

LEVINE: Wow. So you got married and then where did you live with your husband?

SPADALINI: On Staten Island.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Because the father had a business there. He made monuments for the cemetery.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And I'd go and say—on Sunday, they used to take me and stay there with them, you know, at the beginning. But this was be—before he asked me to go out with him, you know. The sister, we were friends and we used to say, "We're going to Staten Island." So he would ask my father, you know, my mother, "We're going to take her to Staten Island with us. She'll be back tonight," you know. It—going back and forth—

LEVINE: And that's how you got to know him?

SPADALINI: Yeah, but I knew him from before that.

LEVINE: Before that.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Because they lived a couple doors away from me.

LEVINE: Oh. So what was your husband's name?

SPADALINI: Anthony.

LEVINE: Anthony. And [clears throat] so then you moved to Staten Island.

SPADALINI: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And—and he—and he worked in the—in the same—in the monument—

SPADALINI: Yes.

LEVINE: —[unclear]?

SPADALINI: His father, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about you? Did you work at all?

SPADALINI: I used to go to the place there but then I had a child. After two years I was married, I had a child. I had my daughter. And I remember going up there, then coming along with the carriage and pushed the carriage all the way up. It was a big walk, and did that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So what was your first child's name?

SPADALINI: Marie.

LEVINE: Marie. And then did you have oth—you had other children?

SPADALINI: Three years later, I had Anthony. That's it, just the two. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Just the two. Uh-huh, uh-huh. So what has brought you great satisfaction, would you say, in your life?

SPADALINI: I—I think it was nice when I was young going out.

LEVINE: Like where would you go?

SPADALINI: With my girlfriends. We had a lot of—we used to go dancing each other's house, you know. Who had the piano—my—my in-laws had the piano. I [unclear]—well, they weren't my in-laws first but we had the piano. And we would dance and have a lot of fun. That was our fun that we had at the time.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Three, four girls get together, you know. My mother-in-law has seven girls. So [chuckles]—

LEVINE: Wow, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: So we really had a houseful.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: We really enjoy that, you know, going to each other's house. That was it.

LEVINE: So you—you enjoyed your in-laws before they were your in-laws?

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: You enjoyed—

SPADALINI: The girls.

LEVINE: —the company.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: They had a piano, used to, you know—we used to play the piano and the sisters used to play the piano.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: She took it up and—not music because she'd just play by ear.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And it was nice.

LEVINE: And when you look back on the fact that you came here as a little girl—

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —and—and really, your whole life changed—

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you—do you think—what impact do you think that had on you, personally, on—on your personality? Do you think it made a difference in the kind of person you became or—

SPADALINI: I don't think so because, really, when you leave your town you forget about everything, I guess. You think about who's there but you—I don't know what to say.

LEVINE: Mmm, uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: [chuckles]

LEVINE: And of course—

SPADALINI: Ri—

LEVINE: —your family was here.

SPADALINI: Was here then, you know—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: —and we were all here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And—and we'd visit our relatives, you know. And we used to go walking. Before I got married we used to walk and walk down to Halimari [PH] Street. That's where all the [unclear], all the food and stuff, to buy stuff.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPADALINI: It was quite a walk down, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: We enjoyed it.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. I guess you've seen a lot of changes in life.

SPADALINI: Hmm, do you mean in this country? Ah, as a little girl?

LEVINE: Well, I mean, like, you—the fact that you walked down to where they had the wagons and—

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —b—I mean, all that's changed now and—

SPADALINI: Right. I've seen a lot of change but I don't know. I think I was a very happy girl.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: You know, walking, being with my friends and all that. We had a lot of fun.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Before I started going out with my husband. Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And then did you remain in Brooklyn?

SPADALINI: Uh-hmm. Stayed in Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: We all got married and my brother still lives in Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. And when you got married you went to Staten Island.

SPADALINI: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And the—for a while, but then I moved back to Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Okay. Well, is there anything you can think of about your life that maybe—the Depression and how that affected—

SPADALINI: Oh.

LEVINE: —your—you and your family?

SPADALINI: Oh, that was the Depression. Yes. It was hard [unclear].

LEVINE: Do you remember anything in particular that stands out about that period of time?

SPADALINI: During the Depression? Well, we always had stuff in the house. I don't—

LEVINE: You—you still managed to—

SPADALINI: To [unclear]—

LEVINE: —eat and have—

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: Right.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about World War II? Were there any personal experiences that affected you—

SPADALINI: No.

LEVINE: —around World War II?

SPADALINI: I was small and I—

LEVINE: Hmm.

SPADALINI: All I remember that my mother wanted to get here on account of my brothers.

LEVINE: Say it again?

SPADALINI: My mother wanted to get to America to bring my brothers here so they wouldn't go—

LEVINE: So they wouldn't have to fight in the war.

SPADALINI: War.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah.

SPADALINI: Hmm.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, is there anything else you can think of that maybe we haven't talked that—that was important in your life, or maybe something that was very pleasant, or maybe something that was very hard?

SPADALINI: I don't remember. I—I don't think I had anything too hard. I remember that my mother had a brother and sister and they lived in Syracuse. And we used to corresponds with them. And I remember

my mother going to visit them, her and my sister, first time they went to see the brother and sister from Syracuse.

LEVINE: Hmm. They—they probably went by train.

SPADALINI: By train, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And then I remember the time that my aunt came back to visit us also, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Was that the aunt that you left, that you felt bad about leaving when you left?

SPADALINI: No.

LEVINE: No.

SPADALINI: That was my mother's sister.

LEVINE: Oh, okay.

SPADALINI: That was my—my father's sister.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, how do you feel about being at Ellis Island today?

SPADALINI: Well, it seems so different though, you know. The way it was then. I remember it was a big, big room, you know, and so many people were in it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And—and I remember the loaf of bread that they gave us. That's what I remember.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPADALINI: And now it's nice and clean and everything.

LEVINE: [chuckles]

SPADALINI: You know.

LEVINE: It wasn't so clean then, huh?

SPADALINI: [chuckles] Well, I guess all the people—

LEVINE: With all the people, right.

SPADALINI: Coming in, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Okay. Well, is there anything that you want to say in closing before we close?

SPADALINI: Well, I had a very good life and marriage with my two children. And my children still stand behind me all the time.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: And we call one another up all the time. And I enjoy my daughter-in-law. She's like my sister—she's like my daughter. And that's my Marie and Claudia.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SPADALINI: And I have a granddaughter, my son's granddaughter, Lisa, which I love her very much. She's the only girl we have in the house and now she has a little girl.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SPADALINI: And her name is Nicole, which I adore her. And my daughter has two grandsons, which are very sweet. They're adorable. But I don't get to see that often because they live about an hour away from us [unclear]. But Lisa and the baby, I see more often.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, you really have a beautiful family.

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that's wonderful. I want to—

SPADALINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —thank you very much—

SPADALINI: [unclear].

LEVINE: —for—

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[END OF INTERVIEW]