

EL-1281/MARCO

EL-1281

FRANK MARCO

BIRTHDATE: FEBRUARY 12, 1912.

INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 28, 2003

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 91

RUNNING TIME: 58:28

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: ADRIANA ARDELEAN

TAANSRIPT REVIEWED BY:

ROMANIA, 1920

AGE: 8 and 1/2 years old

SHIP: NEW AMSTERDAM

PORT: BOULOGNE, FRANCE

RESIDENCES:

- **ROMANIA: BESAARIABIA**

**THE US: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS AND CHIGAGO, ILLIONOIS
PHENIOX, ARIZONA LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

LEVINE: Today is June 28, 2003. And I here in the Ellis Island studio, with Frank Marco, who came here from what was BesaArabia a part of Romania. When he was eight and a half years old in 1920.

MARCO: Right.

LEVINE: The family went briefly to San Antonio, Texas and then moved to Chicago where the family settled for some time. Ok, This is Janet Levine for the

National Park service. Ok Mr. Marco if you would say what your name was, or first would you like to say an introduction.

MARCO: I would like to. I would like to say something first. I would like to thank my granddaughter Daniel and her parent's Joni and Corry Marco for allowing me to be part of Danny special day. Which is her Bar mitzvah.

LEVINE: Ok, that's lovely; I would like you to start by saying you name, as it would have appeared on the ship manifest.

MARCO: My name as it would have appeared if they had the records of it would be Efpfran Gindler (ph).

LEVINE: And, whom did you travel with?

MARCO: I traveled with my Grandmother, my mother her sister and her brother and my two younger brothers.

LEVINE: Uh-hum, so you were the oldest boy of three.

MARCO: I was the oldest one of my mothers.

LEVINE: Ok, and your birthday please.

MARCO: My birthday, it's strange to say I do not know my actual birthday. When I came here they had the birthday in the Jewish calendar. They used to count the birthdays in the Jewish calendar, which I don't know. But when I got to Chicago and I started school they decided my birthday would be February 12, 1912. Which is as close as could tell. So my actual birthday, as of the record is February 12, 1912.

LEVINE: Ok, and lets talk about your memories first, of life in what was Romania?

MARCO: Was Romania.

LEVINE: You say you were brought up in a small village.

MARCO: Small village, right.

LEVINE: Why don't you say the name of the village and anything you remember about it.

MARCO: Ok, the name of the village is, was called Verdejem (ph) it was on the bank of, A river called, the Nisu (ph) river, which is now part of the boarder between Moldova and Ukraine, right now. When I lived there my eldest memory is of Pogrom (ph) when I was maybe four of five years old that is one of my earliest memories.

LEVINE: What do you recall about that?

MARCO: I recall hiding in a basement for, over a, one day with my family. In a basement that was boarded up and while the Cossacks rode through the village. And did whatever damage they could. And killed many people, that was my earliest memory.

LEVINE: Uh-hum, was the village mainly Jewish people or where there?

MARCO: There were mainly Jewish, I believe there were over five thousand people living in there and most of them were Jewish.

LEVINE: I see, and what do you remember about either the house you lived in or the village it's self?

MARCO: I remember, I remember that one year were they had a very big snow storm and we had to dig our way out of our house. I remember going to a Hebrew school there, which is called Lekiter (ph) and I remember the Rabbi who was the teacher at that Hebrew school. And I remember going there for a long time.

LEVINE: Now you were Orthodox Jewish family? Were you?

MARCO: Well I would say we were Orthodox, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hum.

MARCO: There was no other, there was no other kind.

LEVINE: There was no other choice, (laughing) Uh-hum, so uh, so what did you do as far as observing your religion, in that little village.

MARCO: What did I do? Well I was part of the religion was going to that Hebrew school. Other then that I don't remember very much.

LEVINE: Uh-hum,

MARCO: I remember that one time that we went to school run by the Russian for two weeks, for Russian school and then I don't know what happen after that.

LEVINE: You mean?

MARCO: I just went for two week and that was it.

LEVINE: Where you expecting to go longer, ok, and let me just see. Where you expecting to go longer and you just got cut off or?

MARCO: I don't remember, its just part of my memory at that time was that I spent two weeks in a Russian school. And that was it, the rest of the time, I spent in a, uh a thing what they call the Lekiter (ph) which is like a school run by a Rabbi with maybe ten or twelve other kids there too.

LEVINE: Uh-hum so that was the, in the Lekiter (ph) was the education that you got.

MARCO: That was the education that. That was the education that I got. Up until the time I, we came to America.

LEVINE: I see would you say that you lived in fear? When you were in you're little...

MARCO: I would say that we were very poor and very hunger. I remember that because, we didn't have any bread. In stead of bread they cooked cornmeal. They cooked the cornmeal and that was called. Should I tell you the Jewish name?

LEVINE: Sure.

MARCO: Its called Mamaliga that was the name. And the Cornmeal and for dessert they used to sweeten it and the called Mamalaia.

LEVINE: Oh-hum

MARCO: And that was. That's what I remember as far as being poor.

LEVINE: Yeah, What was your father's name?

MARCO: My fathers name as far as I know was Yankel (ph).

LEVINE: Yankel, and did you. What did your father do?

MARCO: He was a baker.

LEVINE: Oh.

MARCO: But I don't remember much about him, because the only recollection I have of him is after he and my mother were divorced. And he had another family.

LEVINE: Oh.

MARCO: And, my mother sent me to see him, that one time and ask him if he would buy me a pair of shoes.

LEVINE: What happen when you saw him?

MARCO: He said he didn't, couldn't do it. And that was the only memory I have of my father.

LEVINE: Oh, Well how about your mother? What was her name?

MARCO: Her name was Jewish name or?

LEVINE: Well why don't you give me both.

MARCO: Her Jewish name was Chaia and she went by the name of Gindler, from what I remember she never assumed the last name of her ex-husband. She always went by her maiden name.

LEVINE: Oh, which was.

MARCO: Which was Gindler, her English name was changed to Idha Gindler. When she came here.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. So, her son's had her maiden name.

MARCO: All her son's have her maiden name. In other words my two brothers that came with me were called Gindler. And they were both younger, one was called Abraham, latter changed to Al when he came here. And the other one was Isadore latter changed to Irving.

LEVINE: And could you spell your mother Jewish name, her first name?

MARCO: G I N D L E R

LEVINE: And her first name, Jewish?

MARCO: Her first name, Jewish was C H A I A.

LEVINE: Ok, well what did your mother do?

MARCO: My mother was a seamstress. From what I remember, She used to make shirts for these soldiers the Cossack's. That I remember you know when they were peaceful. And that's all I remember here doing.

LEVINE: And would she do that at home?

MARCO: Yes everything was done at home.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-hum. So do you remember anything that was enjoyable as a little boy up too eight and a half years old.

MARCO: Any thing that was enjoyable in Europe, no, nothing that was enjoyable.

LEVINE: Well did you have friends?

MARCO: No, no friends.

LEVINE: Well.

MARCO: That I remember.

LEVINE: When you uh, what would be like a typical day. You would go to school? Did you have children?

MARCO: I would get up in the morning go to Lekiter (ph) spend all day there. And come home at night with a lantern with a candle in it. I remember that part.

LEVINE: It would be already dark probably.

MARCO: It would be already dark, but I would spend all day there.

LEVINE: Well, and than did you have chores around the house? Did you have things?

MARCO: I don't remember that. I don't remember doing any chores. All this, you know eight three years ago.

LEVINE: Yeah I know. Ok do you have any other memories?

MARCO: You know what. Even as far back as in my youth here I still don't remember what I did there.

LEVINE: Well I guess it wasn't very pleasant.

MARCO: (unintelligent) I would say that maybe I blocked it out.

LEVINE: That would make sense yeah. Well oh, Verdejem is they're anything else about that place that you do?

MARCO: About that place? I did go back there.

LEVINE: Oh you did?

MARCO: A few years ago with my son, with my oldest son. And we spent four days in that vicinity, we tried to find out my roots were I came from, but eighty years ago. None of the people remembered. None of the people there where that old. When we came back there so I could not. I did remember the village; I remembered what it looks like. I remembered what our house looked like and some of the houses when I came back there looked exactly the same. And had the same layout. I can describe it.

LEVINE: Why don't you describe it.

MARCO: I can describe it. It was like a cottage. A two-room cottage, the center point of it was a fireplace with a stoop, with a ledge on the side and I used. Which was warm and I remember spending some time there. And when I went back there, the house was there the people that I visited had a house exactly like that. When I went back, when I told you there were about five thousand people in the village that, they were most of them Jews. When I went back there, which was about five years ago. There was one Jewish family there in the whole village. One Jewish family. And I did remember some other things back there. I remembered we lived in, we lived in river you know or the village was situated on the Nestrú River, and it changed many hands, during that time. From Russia, to Romania to Ukraine all up and back. And I remember in the winter time people would try go across that river to go from one place to the other. And they would get shot, in the morning they would find them, during the night they would try get, in the morning they would find the bodies floating on the ice.

LEVINE: Whoa, now who would shoot them?

MARCO: The various soldiers from the different countries.

LEVINE: In otherworlds would these people be trying to escape?

MARCO: People who were trying to escape from one country to another. You see they changed so many times.

LEVINE: Well I can understand why you may not want to remember a lot of that.

MARCO: Yes, I don't want... those hard parts that I told you about. Hiding in the basement, during a pogrom and I remember the bodies floating in the river in the wintertime.

LEVINE: Uh-hum yeah, Well do you? What language were you speaking?

MARCO: Yiddish.

LEVINE: Yiddish, uh-hum why was it decided that you would leave for America when you did?

MARCO: Our family was originally my grandmother, consisting of my grandmother and her husband and she had two boys who would be my uncles two boys. And of course my mother and my aunt that came over with us. And my other uncle a younger, younger one. Well the family, the first ones to leave for America were my two Uncles. One of them settled in Texas, One of them settled in Mason City Iowa. When they got enough money together, they started to send for somebody to come over. The first one they bought over was my grandfather, his name was Laib (ph), he was the first one that they bought over and he settled with them in San Antonio Texas. And that's what I told you we first came over. We went to live with them, with my grandfather and my uncle. My grandmother was separated from my grandfather but they decided to try to stay together but it did not work and we went, as a result they went back to Chicago and my grandfather stayed with my uncle there. Any way I am getting a head of myself. The two uncles that lived here, one was named Isaac and the one was named Henry. Henry was the oldest and Isaac was younger, Isaac went to live in Mason City and Henry lived in the vicinity of San Antonio, in fact Wymer Texas. Well, when they saved enough money they bought my grandfather back, and then they decided that they were going to bring the rest of the family over. Which included my grandmother, and my mother, and my aunt and uncle, and her brother and of course my younger brothers. Well to do that, my. The oldest brother Henry was the one elected to come over and bring us.

LEVINE: Oh

MARCO: When he came, he came and he stayed for about a month, which was the time, I guess it took for him to make arrangement. And while he was there he meets his future wife. He married her and bought her with him and the rest of us. He came over, I remember he came over I guess first class. We came over in Steerage.

LEVINE: Uh-hum what do you remember? Go ahead.

MARCO: That's why, that's why when somebody ask me did I see the Statue of Liberty, no you don't see the Statue of Liberty in Steerage.

LEVINE: What do you remember about Henry?

MARCO: Henry was a very. Both my uncles were good men. You have to know that they were good men when they saved up enough money to bring that whole family over, you know it cost them a lot of money to do that but they did.

LEVINE: Do you remember your grandparents?

MARCO: I remember, I remember my grandmother, but she lived with us in Chicago. I remember my grandfather very little because he was in San Antonio and lived by himself. But I do remember what he looked like in fact I might have some pictures of him.

LEVINE: Really, Well do you remember any experiences with either your grandmother or grandfather?

MARCO: Not my grandfather, my grandmother who lived with us. My mother went to work when we came because she was a single person and my grandmother stayed home and took care of us.

LEVINE: Oh I see.

MARCO: I remember her making breakfast or dinner for cooking for us and I was very fussy I didn't like what she made (laughing) which was a constant trouble. But my grandmother was very, very good and I remember her in fact I have pictures of her, yes.

LEVINE: OK well, Uh so do you remember leaving your home?

MARCO: Yes I remember leaving my home.

LEVINE: Ok what happen when you.

MARCO: What happen? My mother had re-married and at the time she was living with or separated from this person, or living with them. When my uncle came to bring us, he wanted to come, her ex-husband wanted to come along with her and he did we left on a carriage. I remember leaving in a carriage and traveling and I remember him tagging along drunk until they finally go rid of him some how.

LEVINE: Uh-hum this would be your father?

MARCO: No well it was my stepfather at the time.

LEVINE: Stepfather, yeah, so he never came with you?

MARCO: Never came with us, no. They wouldn't, they wouldn't, my mother didn't want him and they did not take him.

LEVINE: Uh-hum so even leaving was not a pleasant...

MARCO: No even leaving was hard.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MARCO: We had a very hard trip, I remember on the carriage then going, then we had to go over, remember all the way from what was then probably near Ukraine you know. We remember going from there all the way to Boulogne in France, so that was quite a trip and I remember going by carriage also by boat and by train until we arrived to Boulogne. Which is were we left.

LEVINE: I see so it must have taken a while?

MARCO: It took a while yes. I don't know how long. But it took a while

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about that trip to the port?

MARCO: To the, no I don't.

LEVINE: Uh-hum, And how.

MARCO: But I do remember the trip on the boat.

LEVINE: Ok, so why don't you say a few.

MARCO: What was the trip on the boat like?

LEVINE: What was the name of it. Do you remember the name?

MARCO: Yes, the New Amsterdam.

LEVINE: Ok.

MARCO: In fact there is a picture of it, on a postcard there, which we looked up.

LEVINE: Yes, ok.

MARCO: In fact my son got the manifest and the strange part about the manifest is that everybody was on there except my brothers and myself. Is that strange?

LEVINE: Yeah. It is.

MARCO: I know we came in here. We're here.

LEVINE: And your mothers on there and the rest of them? And your uncles too?

MARCO: My mothers on there and my uncle and the sister and we're not on the manifest.

LEVINE: Well, that was copied from microfiche and you know do to human error maybe it was just something, somebody got a phone call and came back and continued in a different spot.

MARCO: I don't, I don't know what happened. It's very strange.

LEVINE: Strange yes it is. Ok, so what was the voyage like?

MARCO: The voyage, well all I remember was I was throwing up the whole time.

LEVINE: Oh (laughing).

MARCO: (laughing) That all I remember about the voyage. I don't remember eating anything or anything. I remember being sick all, the whole trip.

LEVINE: Do you remember when the ship came into the New York harbor? Now you mentioned you were in steerage.

MARCO: Yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about steerage?

MARCO: Ah, no because I remember being sick that's all I remember about steerage. And I don't remember embarking off the ship but I do remember when I did embark, I embarked at Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Yeah, and what was Ellis Island?

MARCO: Ellis Island at that time was this. Third, this floor up here that we're on, I believe it's this floor. On both sides of the, of the...

LEVINE: Balcony.

MARCO: Balconies were cells. Where the people like myself were detained for various reasons. I evidently was either mal nourished or had rickets or something. But I had to stay two weeks in one of the cells.

LEVINE: Oh.

MARCO: That's what I remember, and I remember my uncle, My Uncle Henry came one time and bough me bananas, which was the first time I ever saw banana.

LEVINE: How did you react to the banana?

MARCO: You know I did not know what it was.

LEVINE: Yeah, ah-hum, now you were the only one in the family that had some kind of condition?

MARCO: Right. I was the only one.

LEVINE: Know was the rest of the family have to stay here too?

MARCO: No, they went ahead. I believe they went to San Antonio. And then I joined them latter with my uncle.

LEVINE: Well what was it like for eight year old little boy to be here for two week by himself?

MARCO: I must have blotted that out because I don't remember, only remember being there.

LEVINE: And you don't remember was it very crowed here, were you with other children? Do you remember anything?

MARCO: Nope I was I was like alone because I was in a cell by myself. That's all I remember, but I must have had some experience here but I must have blotted it out.

LEVINE: Well, I guess they kept you under observation probably for a few weeks? Is that what they did?

MARCO: They kept me there and treated me for something, I did remember that they gave me some kind of treatment for my hair fell out. And then it grew back in. It was some kind of ex-ray treatment.

LEVINE: Uh, and do you remember anything else about the treatment or what.

MARCO: nothing else.

LEVINE: I see so do you remember getting word that you were free to go?

MARCO: No.

LEVINE: Do you remember getting to San Antonio?

MARCO: Yes I remember getting to San Antonio.

LEVINE: What was that like?

MARCO: What was that like? San Antonio was where my grandfather lived, I remember one time going in the park with him and seeing a colored man for the first time, which I've never seen before. That was my memory of San Antonio.

LEVINE: Uh-hum, do you remember the trip to San Antonio that you had to take alone?

MARCO: Nope, No I believe I must have gone with my uncle because he was still here. Remember I told you he bought me bananas, I believe he and his wife stayed in New York probably for the two weeks and then I must have gone back with him.

LEVINE: So he could visit you here at Ellis and then he brought you back.

MARCO: Right,

LEVINE: He was a good man.

MARCO: Yes he was. You know, very well, like I say for somebody, you know he and my other uncle for them to do things like that. I never forgot that.

END OF SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

LEVINE: In San Antonio, you, were there things that struck you, made an impression on you, before you moved on to Chicago?

MARCO: Just that one instance where I saw a colored man for the first time.

LEVINE: Ok, then who went to Chicago with you?

MARCO: The whole family, the whole family, my mother, my grandmother, my mother, her brother, her younger brother and her younger sister. And the three kids, my two brothers and I. We all went and I believe we stayed with a cousin of my mothers for a while. Ah, at that time things were different, you know you couldn't get in to this country unless you could prove that you could make a living. I believe my uncle had to prove that he was able to support this family if they could not support themselves. And a cousin of ours took it upon himself to take us in for about a month or so, maybe longer. I don't know but that we lived with him. And after that my mother evidently went to work and we got a flat and lived there the whole family. The whole family lived there at that time. And eventually split up when my aunt got married and my other uncle got married. And so it was just my mother, and my, her sister until she got married and my grandmother and the three kids. My mother went to work and I remember the flat that we lived in, the first flat in Chicago was on twelfth and Raseen Ave in Chicago. Now I believe or maybe it's torn down since but tenement you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hum so how did it compare with the cottage that you had?

MARCO: Well it was much different we lived in a house we had heat. We had everything we had indoor plumbing (laughing).

LEVINE: So life was better right? Uh-hum

MARCO: Yes, because I remember a lot of things then. I remember when I first went to school.

LEVINE: Oh good.

MARCO: When I first went to school I didn't know a word of English and the first thing I knew I was skipping class. I mean they were skipping me, you know at that time they used to skip you when you did well in the grades.

LEVINE: Well so you must have learned English very quickly.

MARCO: I must have learned English very quickly because there were no student teachers there was no bilingual education. But I learned English in school without any help.

LEVINE: Now were you in a particularly Jewish community in Chicago?

MARCO: You know it was called the West Side at that time. And it was a Jewish; mostly Jewish people lived in that particular neighborhood.

LEVINE: Uh-hum, and how did the other children treat you when you first came? Where you called a greenhorn, were you?

MARCO: Yes, we were greenhorns, sure, we were called greenhorns. That was the word, right.

LEVINE: Did it bother you I mean was it was it, was it a problem?

MARCO: No, it was no problem, I got along in school pretty well. I think I got a, acclimated very well in school.

LEVINE: And were the teachers particularly nice and helpful (unintelligent).

MARCO: The teachers were very nice I remember some of them to this day.

LEVINE: Do you remember names of your teachers?

MARCO: Yeah I remember my teachers.

LEVINE: Really.

MARCO: (unintelligent) was a colored lady, young and pretty colored women, another one was a teacher, taught arithmetic, he was very good, I believe his name was Mancell (ph).

LEVINE: Whoa so you remember, when life started getting better your memory got a lot better too (laughing).

MARCO: My memory improved immensely, Really when I think back on it I should have a lot more memories that I remember because eight, eight years old. I know children at that age now days they remember everything. But I don't, except those few ones.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah so, your mother went out to work.

MARCO: My mother went out to work, she eventually married a man, his name was Hymen Marko (ph), that was what I called my step father, Hymen Marko had a family of his own, his wife had died and he was a widower with grown children. There was, his children were Jack, Ruth, Sally and Harry we all lived together when she married. And we were like brothers and sisters.

LEVINE: Oh, so did you move out of the flat?

MARCO: Yes we moved out of the flat. And we went to live in what we called Rogers Park.

LEVINE: Now how old were you when you moved?

MARCO: When we moved, Uh probably about lets see I was out of school by that time, about maybe no I wasn't out of school, fourteen, fourteen and a half. But I do remember my stepfather was not a bad man. He was, he and my mother got along really well. But he didn't get along with my brothers; I remember that part of it. And uh, but the kids, you know really got along really well together.

LEVINE: Uh-hum

MARCO: When I graduated we went to school and at fourteen no sixteen, I graduated and you took a two years high school course. At that time they had two-year high school courses. And I took two-year high school courses, which were called business courses. And I graduated from that school, I graduated with honors but and I wanted to go on, but they couldn't afford to let me go on. I had to go out to work.

LEVINE: So what did you do?

MARCO: I got a job. I got a job at the furniture-manufacturing place and I was the assistant to a bookkeeper. I did real well for awhile and then they let me go after two years, I think I believe. And I went to work for a place called the Law bulletin, which may still be in business. Law bulletin was a legal newspaper published in Chicago; they published their own legal notices. And I went to work at that place.

LEVINE: And how would you spell that Law L-A-W?

MARCO: L-A-W bulletin B-U-L-L-E-T-I-N. I believe it may still be in business. And I we did our work in city hall, Chicago city hall. And I used to make, in the present time, lets see I made uh, maybe twenty dollars a week, I think which was pretty good because most of my friend, the boys that I associated with were not working at all.

LEVINE: Was this, this was now depression time?

MARCO: Depression right, depression time. And I uh, I think we, I did all right till the time a meet my wife.

LEVINE: Now could you just say how did the depression effect you and your family.

MARCO: Effect us, well nobody was working, but I was fortunate I worked. I had a job and all though it wasn't very much. I think a started out with about sixteen dollars a week, but I also had a chance to make some extra money delivering this little news paper to that subscribed to lawyers you know and after work, after I go threw work, I used to deliver those news papers. I had

a new paper route downtown, downtown Chicago in the offices. And I used to make three dollars a week extra for that.

LEVINE: Uh-hum so how did you meet your wife?

MARCO: How did I meet my wife, well we, we were, a group of boys you know the boys didn't, none of us had any money, so we did what we could to amuse ourselves. We organized clubs; I belonged to a club with a bunch of other boys. And like I said I was the only one working in that group but we were all together so we had to have a clubhouse. So we, we rented a basement flat at that time and paid three dollars a month and that was our club house, we went, we use to meet there. And one of the times we used to meet, and boys would bring over girls and we would dance and so. And one time one of the, the members of my club he bough his sister, his sister was, Esther smith and her girlfriend which was Glades More, my wife. He brought her down their and that's how we meet.

LEVINE: Uh-hum, Well now did you like her right away.

MARCO: Right away (laughing).

LEVINE: What was it about her that you were taken by?

MARCO: Well she was, she had a good figure, she was cute and she was good-looking and I liked her and I think she like me. And we started going steady.

LEVINE: Uh-hum so how look did you see each other before you got married then.

MARCO: I think we went together for about a couple of years and then we got married on twenty dollars a week.

LEVINE: Now, was your family able to get along, was your mother able to keep working?

MARCO: Oh, oh I have to tell you about that you know at that time everybody that lived, you know all the kids they lived with there parents. They contributed, you know they paid, they earned whatever they earned they either paid all of it or part of it. When I lived with my parents, I used to pay all my money and then I'd get three dollars a week for car prayer (?) and you know I would take my lunches to work. After I met my wife, and we decided to get married. My folks, I had to assure my folks that I would help them. That I would give them part of my salary (laughing) for them, that they had to do without that, which I didn't. But that was the way thing were in those days.

LEVINE: Right, right so than did you get a separate flat in Chicago?

MARCO: Oh right away, we got a flat, we rented a studio, what they called a studio apartment. What we call a studio apartment in Chicago, seventy-thirty Sheraton Road was the address. Do you know where (unintelligent) Chicago, close to the lake front and we had a very cute apartment, very roomy more roomy than some of the apartments now. And we lived there for a while.

LEVINE: I've been there but I don't know it that well. Well that seems like that was a happy time for you?

MARCO: It was a happy time yeah sure.

LEVINE: So then what happen did you stay with that job for a while and when did you leave it and what did you do?

MARCO: Well, when I meet my wife her family, her dad and was insurance, He worked for an insurance company. Or he was a salesman pardon me he was a salesman actually all his life and I didn't see any future in the place I was working with twenty dollars a week. You know when I told them I was getting married, I asked for a raise and they said they couldn't afford to give me a raise. So I was going nowhere there, and my father in-law said you come, you would make a good salesman. I can get you in as a salesman for an insurance company in Chicago. So he did get me in insurance company, in those days insurance salesman had what they called a weekly debit. They carried a book and they sold and they sold policies and they collected them. That was the called a debit, you had a certain territory, you'd collect the debit and you would make so much for collection and you'd make extra if you sold insurance. So I went to work for that company and I did very well.

LEVINE: You would call on people in their homes?

MARCO: What?

LEVINE: You would call on people in their homes?

MARCO: I would have steady routes, what they called a steady route. I would call on people every week to collect their money for their insurance. That's the way people and this was in the colored neighborhood in Chicago. Very low class neighborhood in Chicago there. And so I did very well working for them up until the time we decided to leave Chicago to live in California.

LEVINE: What made you make that decision?

MARCO: Well, we had our. The first two children and the third one were on the way. On the wedding night, My older son Dale, and then my other son Corey, Dr

Marko was born, He was born during the wartime in 1941, December 7, 1941. Actually in those days I was all set to go in the army but then they drafted everybody at that time. And they got to the point where they were drafting married men.

LEVINE: Uh-hum

MARCO: And so, Uh then they drafted me, I was 1A I passed my physical I was ready to leave and the war came to a end at that time. So anyway, after that my youngest daughter was born. But we decided that we didn't like the weather anymore we wanted to go to a warmer climate. We were suffering from; my wife was suffering from hay fever very badly at that time. They didn't have any hay fever remedies and people use to go away to places like Michigan and those places to get away from hay fever. So, and you know she had this hay fever and the kids were starting to get sick from that, so we decided we were going to go to a warmer climate. And we looked up the place were we would like to go. And the place at that time that did not have any allergies was Phoenix, Arizona. So I went to Phoenix, Arizona and looked around got a job came back home and we decided to move. And we did my daughter was two months old when we moved to Phoenix. So we went to Phoenix and stayed there for one year. Which seemed like twenty, because it was so hot. (Laughing) Phoenix was hot. And it wasn't all that It was cracked up to be as far as hay fever was certain, because people would say hey what are you here for it was so hot. They use to come here because they had TB and they'd live in a certain section. What are you here for and I said we came here for hay fever. The hay fever was worst there then any place else (laughing). So we stayed a year and then we moved Los Angeles. We lived in Los Angeles for a while and Uh.

LEVINE: (laughing) Were you still being a salesman when you made these moves?

MARCO: Yes when I came, I was an insurance salesman in Phoenix, I got a job as insurance salesmen there, doing the same kind of work. And then I, when we came to Los Angeles, they had a branch called the, you know the United Insurance Companies. The insurance company I worked for not the same United that's here now, but they did the same, sold to the same types of people that. And I got a job with them, again and I worked for them for a while. And then decided I was going to go in Business for my self.

LEVINE: And what business did you go into?

MARCO: I went into the Venetian blinds and floor covering business.

LEVINE: And that what you did then?

MARCO: That's what I did then.

LEVINE: We are getting close to the end of the tape and I want to ask you what would you say were the high points of your life?

MARCO: The high points, well I'd say our marriage, we had a beautiful wedding, something very different at that time.

LEVINE: Uh what was different about your wedding?

MARCO: Different at our wedding, we talk about it a lot, her brother, see my wife's brother, she had a younger brother eight year younger then her at that time he was about twelve year old. He was a pageboy, he came out with a horn and banner you know on the horn and he announced our wedding.

LEVINE: Oh.

MARCO: That was the highlight. (Laughing) That was the highlight.

LEVINE: (laughing) that's great that's great. And when you look back on the whole immigration, you know coming here as an eight year old. And building a whole new life in this country. How do you think, do you think that effected you as far as your personality the way you approach things? What kind of an impact do you think it had on you as a person?

MARCO: The immigration part I would say didn't have any, it didn't have any except Well I was to young to realize what impact it did have on me. I don't, I don't think it had any impact on me.

LEVINE: Uh-hum, uh-hum yeah And do you, How do you think about yourself. Do you think about yourself as? Well let me ask you this question did you family want you to become Americanized, was that part of how...

MARCO: Everybody wanted to become Americanized, my mother you know she was pretty old at that time for a woman, she went to night school to learn English.

LEVINE: Good for her.

MARCO: Every body wanted to learn English at that time. There was no question at about it.

LEVINE: Uh-hum yeah, is there anything else that you can think of about your life here I mean obviously compared with what you might have had if you had stayed. There is quite a difference, had you stayed in uh.

MARCO: In Russia, I'd be dead now because the whole village was wiped out during the war. All the Jews, like I told you, out of that many Jews there was only one living there now. I wouldn't be and when I went back there they said I was a very smart man for leaving (laughing).

LEVINE: Uh-hum So did you become an American citizen under your parent papers. How did you do that?

MARCO: I would be. The law at that time said that if my mother was an American citizen, I was automatically an American citizen. But to make sure I went out and got my own citizenship papers.

LEVINE: (Laughing) I see.

MARCO: Which I do have.

LEVINE: And do you remember that day when you became a citizen? Was that a big event for you or was it something you wanted to do?

MARCO: No it was something I wanted to do and did it and I was happy to do it.

LEVINE: And how about these visit today which is such a big event for your family.

MARCO: This day, this day, when I look back I've been married sixty-eight years, I would say, I, I don't say I was monetarily uh wealthy. I didn't become wealthy I mean, but I am wealthy because of my children and their children. And the respect they have for me.

LEVINE: Oh, yeah well I think that's a beautiful place to end this interview. I want to thank you so much.

MARCO: Your welcome.

LEVINE: It's a lovely interview and.

MARCO: This is quite a surprise for me and I feel it's quite an honor that they would want to do that.

LEVINE: Uh-hum well now your voice will be part of our collection and it will be here at Ellis Island and your story will be carried on.

MARCO: Oh good.

LEVINE: Thank you so much I've been speaking with Frank Marco who came here as an eight year old in 1920 from what was BesaArabia which is part of

Romania at the time. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park service and I am signing off.