

**EI-1360**

**NEDA MATKOVICH**

**BIRTHDATE: MARCH 8, 1907**

**INTERVIEW DATE: JANUARY 2, 2005**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 97**

**RUNNING TIME:**

**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE**

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**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: RACHEL SMITH AND VANESSA FRITH**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**COUNTRY, YUGOSLAVIA**

**AGE: 18**

**SHIP: GEORGIC**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES:**

**ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: NEDA'S SON JOHN WAS IN ATTENDANCE.**

LEVINE: Today is January the second, the year 2005. I'm here with Neda Matkovich, who came here just before her eighteenth birthday on February tenth, she remembers, 1925.

MATKOVICH: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: The country that she came from was Yugoslavia, which it became after World War I. It had been Austria when-

MATKOVICH: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Ms. Matkovich was born. Let's see. Her birth date is March 8, 1907.

MATKOVICH: Right.

LEVINE: And we're here in the home of her son John Matkovich and this is in Palm Harbor, Florida. OK, if we could start at the beginning. Why don't you say where you were born, when it was Austria. Where were you born?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, in uh, [not understood], say I was [not understood] when I was born.

LEVINE: And the city or the town?

MATKOVICH: City, or? Brgorrac.[ph] (laughs) And, pretty nice, big town.

LEVINE: Really? Do you happen to know how to spell it?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. (laughs)

LEVINE: Or maybe John, can you spell it?

JOHN: B-R-, should I know?

MATKOVICH: G-O-

LEVINE: Go ahead.

MINKOFF: R-R-A-C.

LEVINE: Great, OK. Pronounce it one more time.

MATKOVICH: Brgorrac.

LEVINE: Br-go-rrac

MATKOVICH: Brgorrac

LEVINE: Brogorrac. OK now did you live in Brogorrac up until you left for America?

MATKOVICH: Yes.

LEVINE: OK. And, what was your mother's name?

MATKOVICH: Uh, Katie. Kata, Katie.

LEVINE: Katie?

MATKOVICH: Kat, Katie, Kata, [not understood]. In my language, says Kata, eh.

LEVINE: So it was like K-A-T-A?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Kata.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: And her maiden name?

EI-1360 Matkovich

MATKOVICH: Maiden name- Markovich [ph]. Only r and t different from Matkovich.

LEVINE: Oh!

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: OK. So,

MATKOVICH: Mar-ko-vich.

LEVINE: M-A-R-K-O-V-I-C

MATKOVICH: C

LEVINE: H?

MATKOVICH: Yes.

LEVINE: Great. And your father's name?

MATKOVICH: Vincent.

LEVINE: Vincent. OK. Now when you think of Borgorrac (struggles through pronunciation)

JOHN: Borgorrac.

LEVINE: Borgorrac.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Borgorrac. What do you remember about it? What do you remember about the place?

MATKOVICH: Well, I went to grade school, and uh, just working. (laughs) I don't

LEVINE: You worked before you came?

MATKOVICH: I remember work. I was in [not understood] at first. I, I don't know what to say. Yeah, we work. Ugh, till I go ya know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, just went to church or something. I don't know

LEVINE: OK. What church did you go to?

MATKOVICH: A Croatian church. Church Saint Peter.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you, ugh, were you a religious family? Was your family very religious?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, it wasn't nobody but Catholics in, in that particular area. I was as religious and everything. I didn't know nothing else but Catholic.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you, did you observe certain holidays? Were there certain church religious holidays?

MATKOVICH: Yes.

LEVINE: Can, can you say anything about what you did to observe?

MATKOVICH: Ugh, I don't know what.

LEVINE: Like Christmas or Easter?

MATKOVICH: If it was big, big day. Everybody would celebrate and, and go to a, I don't

LEVINE: You would go to church?

MATKOVICH: Yes

LEVINE: And then what would we do after you went to church?

MATKOVICH: I don't, I'd go home? (laughs)

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And I'd do something. Like everybody, ya know. I was just a, poor girl (laughs). I didn't know

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What did your father do for work?

MATKOVICH: He was shoemaker.

LEVINE: Uh, uh-huh. And did you have brothers and sisters there?

MATKOVICH: This is my little sister. There is she is in Philadelphia.

LEVINE: And what was her name?

MATKOVICH: Angela, Angeline. [ph]

LEVINE: Angelina. [ph] OK. And um, so it was just your mother, your father, Angelina and you?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: And did you have grandparents? Grandmother, grandfather?

MATKOVICH: I just barely remember a little bit my mother's mother and my grandma and my father was from, like, different part and I don't remember much of his family.

LEVINE: Okay. Do you remember your grandma, at all? Do you have any memories?

MATKOVICH: A little, yeah, from my mother's mother yes, I remember when she die and people was coming and (?), yeah. She was a really clean women (laughs).

LEVINE: And how did she treat you?

MATKOVICH: Okay then whats, what. Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you have aunts and uncles, did your mother have sisters or brothers? They were also around?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah. My mother's brother was here in America in New Jersey and one was over there in, uh, that's what she done with my brother and my uncle house, you know, a parent stays with their son. (laughs)

LEVINE: I see. Okay. And let see. How about- what did you do for fun? What did you do to play or have fun when you were a little girl?

MATKOVICH: Nothing. Just in our, in a certain house we get together or something. Wasn't big fun it was (?).(laughs) Yeah

LEVINE: How about any kind of any kind of singing or dancing or music?

MATKOVICH: Yeah that's- that what I said. Now somebody may have harmonica or something or accordion then get together in certain house and we would- that would be now and then when big day, holidays or something then in- in- before I (?) we have a movie theater but it was hard to go (?)

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Because there was no (?) no money.

LEVINE: I see. Well did you know of other people who came to America from your town? We you aware of other people who were leaving?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, my- my first cousin from my mothers sister's daughter and then my sister and my aunt that bring my sister- my aunt come this

country 1907 and then she come back in Europe. She was gonna bring me, I was then some about two, three years old and my father then agree. They didn't want to give me. And I wish they did.  
(both laugh) I would like to come to [not understood], two or three time [not understood] come with me and they never look.

LEVINE: Now did this aunt travel back and forth a number of times?

MATKOVICH: Aunt?

LEVINE: Your mother's sister.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did she go back and forth?

MATKOVICH: No. No she just come the one time.

LEVINE: This one time.

MATKOVICH: In 1921 and then, then she told she was stay over there and bring in [not understood]. Stop but treat me like a, she said "Oh no no. I have to go to back to America."

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: So she went back and then she didn't have no children. Just her and her husband.

LEVINE: I see. So when you were a little girl growing up, did you have the idea that you wanted to come?

MATKOVICH: Oh yeah. That was my dream. I didn't care about nothing else. Oh I'm gonna go to America. I'm, ya know, (laughs). Yeah, the something different. (laughs)

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And better too! I was thinking I like to get out of from here, better life.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. So, um, did your mother and father want to come too?

MATKOVICH: And, my father die.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, in 1916. I was only nine years old.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: So.

LEVINE: What did he die of?

MATKOVICH: Well he was even, he take him in the war. 1914 war started. And then he wasn't, that was first time he gone into something else. And he got sick. And my poor mom bring him home and he, he die home. Right in her arms.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about World War I? Did you have any contact?

MATKOVICH: Yeah I remember.

LEVINE: What do you remember?

MATKOVICH: Oh, I remember first when uh, see France, Yossef [ph] was our king. And this prince, Fer, Ferdinand and his wife was gone, coming, that was 1914. Coming to my town and I was then seven years old. And all the little kids was in line and we have our fill of biscuits. Like, they were throwing to that car there, ya know, old car [not understood]. I don't know why the come through the hill of [not understood], but they come to my town. And I'd seen 'em.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: [not understood]

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: The next day, they drive in Sarajevo [ph] and that's where he got killed.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. I remember that real well. My mom was crying and (?) said "Well, he's not your relative. Are you crying?" My mom, knows already [not understood]. She said "Something bad gonna happen now." A war started and I was [not understood].

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you see any fighting? Did you see anything of the war?

MATKOVICH: Not really, no. My town, but I see, I remember they take everything, ya know. [not understood] or some mule or, or anything better man. And everything was taken. And poor mothers, grandmothers crying and carrying on. That's, that's when it, yeah.

LEVINE: So who was taking it? The soldiers? Who was taking everything?

MATKOVICH: The country because they need it. It was, ya know, poor, needed to help. They taking 'em in the front, but they

LEVINE: Oh taking the men you mean.

MATKOVICH: Yeah the men. Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: There was fighting.

LEVINE: Yeah. So was your father fighting near your town?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. He was, not too far. They call [not understood], ya know. That's, um, that's even, farther even. But, there was, I don't know what they call it, the horses ya know. They taken everything. And never lead the wars before. And then on those [not understood] and everything, they are no sec-. So my mom begging, [not understood]. I remember two foreign women went to see their husbands. And she went with her [not understood]. She went right away and the bigger man and she ask him "Please, let me, let me go." [not understood] And they did let us.

LEVINE: Hmm.

MATKOVICH: He come home and die, yeah.

LEVINE: Do you have memories of your father before he went into the war?

MATKOVICH: Well, yes. Some. Yeah.

LEVINE: What kind of a man was he? What was his personality?

MATKOVICH: Fine. He was pretty [not understood]. (laughs) Did a lot of postings, [not understood].

LEVINE: Was he a strict father?

MATKOVICH: No, no he wasn't strict. He watch me. My mom was the one that was working so hard and he, he would take care of me and my sister. Me and my sister are four years diff-, apart.

LEVINE: Ah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah. So, um, how did you meet your husband?

MATKOVICH: (sighs) That's another thing. My aunt was living in New Jersey. My husband living in West Virginia. But they know her from a young days. And, uh, because it was from one of those villages and not too far from my town. So yeah, she was telling him, intro, two, three of us were to come together. And, ya know, I have the papers already. She paid my fare and everything. And uh, well, she show him pictures and talking that we were gonna come. And my husband was already American citizen. And he thought "I'm not gonna wait till they come. They're gonna get somebody else." He went in Europe and married me and bring me.

LEVINE: Huh.

MATKOVICH: (laughs) That's how happened that I come.

LEVINE: So, when he came to Europe was the first time you met him.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. But I know already his parents and his relatives and-

LEVINE: Yeah. So what did you think when you first saw him? When you first met him?

MATKOVICH: And, I don't mean, what I have in mind "I want to go to America and I don't care who takes me."

LEVINE: (laughs)

MATKOVICH: (laughs) That's how it was.

LEVINE: So, what was your husband's first name?

MATKOVICH: George.

LEVINE: George. Uh-huh. So did he stay, did he stay in Yugoslavia for awhile before he went back?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah he stay for six months, yeah.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. He spend every penny by himself in fifteen years before [not understood].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: So did you have a big wedding? What was your wedding like?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, pretty big, pretty big, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And then we got married in my own church where I was baptized. And then they, we, on the day we take a ride to even to his village. And have a dinner. My friends, my cousins went with me, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Were there any customs in Yugoslavia that were different from here in getting married? Were there any customs that you observed?

MATKOVICH: Well, a little bit different, no not in..

LEVINE: Anything different that you can think of?

MATKOVICH: No. Not anything that only [not understood]. Lot of us eats, and drink and singing and that sort of thing, I remember, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So his people from his village came to your village to the church?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh, let's see. So then you were married for awhile at first.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: You were still there.

MATKOVICH: Uh-huh. Stayed in his house, ya know, with his family.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Stayed for three months. And then we start, leave my own town on January fifth and come to New York (laughs) February tenth.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Because, through the winter, [not understood]. January fifth, that was the worst time we, we come.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: And uh, it was real bad winter. And uh, the boat was just barely moving. It was supposed to pass in, uh, I think about six days. And we stay eleven days.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember getting ready to leave? When you were getting ready to leave and go to the port?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Was there any kind of, did people come to say goodbye?

MATKOVICH: Well yeah but, see we went from my town and my husband didn't realize that he worked at a port. So he didn't do that, but he come in our town in Croatia. Make cities [not understood], they call. And we stay three days there. Stay up three days in the, France. So that they [not understood] more longer time.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: And I was out and strange and never was out of my town. And young and it was, bad trip.

LEVINE: Bad trip. Now was your mother and sister with you when you traveled here?

MATKOVICH: Oh no.

LEVINE: No. You were just with your husband.

MATKOVICH: No, I was just in my town, we just tell them goodbye. And that was it.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. So, um, so you got to the port. And you had to stay three days?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what was that like? What was it like in the port?

MATKOVICH: It wasn't too bad, ya know. You met all the people that were supposed to go and food was good. And you went out and they have regular, like a hotel company for us where we were staying, ya know. We didn't go out or nothing, yeah.

LEVINE: Were there a lot of Croatian people that were going to be leaving?

MATKOVICH: Oh yeah, you bet. [not understood] was all. Two, three of 'em that I met a, done same thing, their husband come and marry them and take them, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So, the name of the ship.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, I'm pretty sure- Georgic. [ph]

LEVINE: Georgic. And what was the passage like? Were there ice? Was the ship moving slowly?

MATKOVICH: Slowly because it was coming closer to New York, yeah.

LEVINE: Was that because there were big ice?

MATKOVICH: Big, big, big, big chunks of ice. I'd never seen that in my life before.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: And, were you in what they call steerage? Were you down in a room with a lot of people or were you in a cabin? Do you remember?

MATKOVICH: I rem-, I was in a cabin, but, ya know, with my husband. And then they call class. We was in second class.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: I didn't know what that mean, ya know.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: There was a first class, then a second. But we walk all over, ya know, in [not understood]. There was, yeah, so.

LEVINE: Were you wondering whether you made a mistake?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. (laughs) I was thinking "I wish I would've stayed in that little place, where I know where I'm supposed to be."

LEVINE: (laughs)

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: OK, do you remember when the Georgic came into the New York Harbor?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. And we come Saturday night, pretty late. And stay all day Sunday because workers, they wanna work, because they supposed to pay them time and a half. And company didn't. Then a group came in the harbor, so we stay till Monday.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: All day Sunday. (laughs)

LEVINE: So they were on strike, kinda?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, or something, yeah.

LEVINE: This was the ship, the people who worked on the ship?

MATKOVICH: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Wow. OK. Now who was supposed to meet you?

MATKOVICH: Well now, nobody they meet us right there. In New York was my [not understood], the agent, ya know, I forget her name. And she took us cross and we went in New York City then.

LEVINE: OK. Because your husband was a citizen.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And then, ya know, we [not understood] so, from New York we went to Camden [ph], New Jersey, where I met my sister after five years. And my aunt who she lived with. And my uncle, my mother's brother, and, and his wife.

LEVINE: I see. So your sister was already here.

MATKOVICH: Was already in America, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, so, did you stay at Ellis Island at all?

MATKOVICH: No. Just [not understood]. So many hours, I guess, I'd, ya know, recall. But, (?) you know everything, a combination of questions, examinations, we was already been through that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And then we went out.

LEVINE: Can you say anything about the agent? Whatever contact you had with your agent.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. Well she was nice.

LEVINE: She was a women that's unusual.

MATKOVICH: Pleasant, pleasant women. We- I remember across the street and it was muddy you know those days horses and buggy and you know the mud, [not understood] as high as the snow and when I come into the area that wasn't that bad weather and uh she called down (?) maybe you heard and I said, "What is this? Why- why so cold?" (Laughs). Yeah. There was (?).

LEVINE: So she arranged for your tickets?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah, everything was arranged, yeah.

LEVINE: And then when you got here- well, is there anything else about Ellis Island? Did you see the Statue of Liberty when you first came in?

MATKOVICH: Ah, Statue of Liberty and make sure I say about that colored man. When we have lunch or something like that, I didn't even know

what I was eating but like from here across to that chair was colored man and the first time I see one. And I was staring for a while and he was eating his lunch and my husband was sitting and he said, "Don't look. (?)." He said, "That (?) they call him black man." He said, "Well what do you mean?" I said, "But he looks like a man." When we- when I heard, you know, 'colored man' I thought it was like a little bit like animal or something but I don't know what I was thinking.

LEVINE: Yeah. Cause you'd never seen it, right?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. Then after that I said, "Oh my God, what was I thinking, yeah?" That was the first time I see.

LEVINE: Yeah, right. Well, did you- how did you get to Camden, New Jersey?

MATKOVICH: By the train, you know, (?) on the train. Yeah. Then my aunt and my uncle, I think, was at the station right there to bring us to their house.

LEVINE: And what was it like seeing your sister again?

MATKOVICH: It (?). Well that was why there was (?) in my mind, you know. I wanna come, she was only fourteen years old but already grown up, you know and she was when we were home she was blond there. The first thing I says was, "What happened to your hair?" (Laughs).

LEVINE: What happened to it?

MATKOVICH: It was blond like. Blond when she went away. She said, "Well, I grow up." (both laugh)

LEVINE: So then did you stay with your aunt and uncle for a little while?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. Just about a week or so then, yeah, then we went to West Virginia.

LEVINE: And your husband had already been in West Virginia and that's-

MATKOVICH: Oh, yeah. For fift-

LEVINE: Now how long- when did he come first?

MATKOVICH: 1910.

LEVINE: 1910.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, so he had been here for quite a while?

MATKOVICH: For about fifteen years, yeah.

LEVINE: Now why did your husband settle in West Virginia?

MATKOVICH: Well he knows a few people that they come first from his village from Europe and they gave you address and you go there and then in- you'd never been much in a school or nothing and that was easier for living in those company houses, a line of company houses. When I come in one I think it was about six just from

Croatia and there were twelve, eleven, twelve, thirteen, ours was fourteen, next one was fifteen then across the street was more Croatians. So I guess you into people and in every big store was a Croatian man. That's everything, ya know, they just come home and they cook something. And they get up early in the morning, go to mine, that's all they know.

LEVINE: Did people take any boarders there? Do you remember?

MATKOVICH: Oh, that's it. That's it. That, first thing. [not understood]

LEVINE: Did you ever take in boarders?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what did you do? In other words, they slept there. Did you feed them and?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah. I was so young. And cook and wash, wash their clothes and clean, [not understood], ya know, go store. And that's it.

LEVINE: So did you-?

MATKOVICH: That was every woman's job, same thing.

LEVINE: Yeah. And so did your husband, was he a boarder before he married you when he was there?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah. That was it, not more people right there. We was, there was a husband and wife there were about, almost from the same village, where he come from.

LEVINE: I see.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: So what was the name of the coal mine, do you remember?

MATKOVICH: Atchinson [ph] Coal Company

LEVINE: Atchinson? [ph]

MATKOVICH: Atchinson [ph] Coal Company

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Atchinson

LEVINE: Atchinson Coal Company

MATKOVICH: Yeah. My house between two hills and I get up in the morning and look at, I mean, America. (laughs) Or some person's [not understood]. My town was prettier, nicer. (laughs)

LEVINE: (laughs) So, did most of the people there worked in the mines?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did your husband talk about the mines much? What do you remember him saying about working there?

MATKOVICH: Oh, they would say something, ya know, between them. I didn't care because I wasn't really satisfied there. I didn't, I was thinking I liked the [not understood]. I got to know people, ya know. That's how you, you just do. What can you do? That's it.

LEVINE: When you first came, were you sorry you had come?

MATKOVICH: Eh, sometime, yeah. I did because I couldn't go to church like I did. I can't see my friends, my cousin or my neighbors. And it was hard, you know.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: You don't know English and somebody could, used to go [not understood] vegetables or fruit. And he talk to you, I didn't know what he say, so I just closed up (?). But that was it.

LEVINE: Yeah. Did your husband know English when you came over?

MATKOVICH: Well yeah, some, yeah.

LEVINE: Some.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, so how did you learn it? How did you learn English?

MATKOVICH: Well now that's, (laughs) ya know, the best we can.

LEVINE: You just learned it as you went along?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, that's it. Oh yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, let's see. So, you were pregnant when you came over?

MATKOVICH: Yes!

LEVINE: And so-

MATKOVICH: Three months already, yeah.

LEVINE: So then you had the baby-

MATKOVICH: In July.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: It was born July nineteenth, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: 1924.

LEVINE: And, 1945?

MATKOVICH: I mean

JOHN: (heard off microphone) '25.

LEVINE: 1925, I'm sorry.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: And, what did you name your first baby?

MATKOVICH: Michael.

LEVINE: Michael. Ok, and, so was your mother here, then?

MATKOVICH: No.

LEVINE: No.

MATKOVICH: No, they weren't.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was that hard having your first baby with your mother not here?

MATKOVICH: Well, I went back to New Jersey to be with my aunt while I am gonna have a baby, yeah.

LEVINE: I see, yeah, I see. So, let's see, do you remember any occasions in the mine when there were either-(aside) what do I want say?- where there were accidents or where the mine caved in or anything like that?

MATKOVICH: No, then, see there was built for some many years, when I know. The woman, those first to come, close the mine.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: And then I heard the man, ya know, that maybe would get killed. I don't mind, (?) close to neighbor who was Croatian woman. She said "Don't wash Monday. That's a bad day." Because she said the first thing you gonna hear, somebody got hurt, somebody- I think she just have that in her mind.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you think people lived in the fear of that, that there might be an accident? Was that something that people lived with I guess?

MATKOVICH: Oh yeah, yes. They did. I know some couple, more than that woman, that they stay there and they die there. For years and years and grown kids who left, but they stay there.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Why do think that is, was? Why do you think they wanted to stay?

MATKOVICH: They're [not understood]. They buy those company houses real cheap, fix a little a bit what was there. For them, that's only life they know. And that was it. Stay.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: But you didn't do that?

MATKOVICH: No I didn't like to stay there. (laughs) But I be moved from different places. Still wasn't nothing (?). And when my boys had grown up, they be build a nice home. And then I start liking it, learn little bit of English. And go in town myself and buy things the way I like. And that, that wasn't bad.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And now, it's better. Yet, in my, uh, and they paying for my living good life on that West Virginia (laughs) [not understood] work.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah. So after you had your first son, then how much later did you have your next son? When did you have your second baby?

MATKOVICH: Well, first I have a little girl that die for me, in two years. Then [not understood] Then I have my baby, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And your husband, did he keep working in the mines that whole time?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah till he retirement, yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. But you built a house in West Virginia?

MATKOVICH: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, I see.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was, were you always in a Croatian community?

MATKOVICH: Little bit of 'em, yeah. There's always, ya know.

JOHN: [not understood off microphone]

MATKOVICH: Yeah, we always have, like I said, I generally go to meeting, ya know. Um, it was like insurance and, ya know, something sick or they come see you or you get paid. So, ya know, start learning and seeing. And then we get paid per week and read the paper. That was, that was enough. That wasn't bad there, yeah. And kids got [not understood], went to school. And that created for their mothers, yeah. Life was going pretty good. (both laughs)

JOHN: I find my dad, well that was like in the early stages. I think that there was, in this coal mining community, that there were Croatian, Croatian people. But as, uh, they got older and moved, then to, I think they moved to a community or an area where there weren't that many, uh, Croatian people. But they still had contact with the so called, the lodge, ya know that was represented from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

LEVINE: Ah.

JOHN: But there were less Croatian people within the immediate area where we, where she mentioned about building a house and all. My mother mentioned, there weren't that many Croatian there.

LEVINE: Uh-hm. Well, what else did the lodge, what else, did you go to social events at the lodge? Would you go to the lodge for a night out?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah?

MATKOVICH: In my town, I was secretary.

LEVINE: Oh!

MATKOVICH: (laughs)

LEVINE: I see. (laughs) So what did the lodge do, besides having the insurance? Did they have a cemetery?

MATKOVICH: They were, you're right, when a person be sick, then a member come to see you. They report, ya know, how you doing and all that.

LEVINE: Um-hm.

MATKOVICH: So, yeah, that was how they doing.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you keep, did you keep up some of the customs from Europe? Were there certain ways that you held on to in this country? Even ways of cooking or-

MATKOVICH: Cooking, there was [not understood]

LEVINE: Still?

MATKOVICH: Cooking yeah. Yeah cooking. First my ten, fifteen years I wouldn't eat no, no this kind of bread. I had to go especially Italian store. And it would get their meat and bread. But I was baking bread. It wasn't two months and I learn how to make a bread my own.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: (laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah and cooking, you have [not understood] (?)

LEVINE: What is some of the dishes that you keep, that you never stop doing?

MATKOVICH: Well, like [not understood], like for New Year's I got cabbage rolls. And ham and things. And Christmas and New Year's and summertime I remember salim [ph]. That was our way of doing it. Little picnics and get toget-, that was, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. So would you have picnics, like with the lodge?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Would you have Croatian food?

MATKOVICH: Uh-huh, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. And every year in the [not understood], what they would call Croatian day. We go in Candlewood [ph] Park and have wonderful time. And the kids, the young kids would be dancing and dressing those- Still yet, they doing that.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: So people came there from all over. Lots of different places?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: To Pittsburgh?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. A lot of people

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, what do you feel proud of that you've done in your life? What makes you feel satisfied?

MATKOVICH: Well, I don't know. I'm not gonna say [not understood]. I just say my boys, they was doing OK and living, like a young boy supposed

to. And this one went to college and he was schoolteacher. And, but, yeah. Like I said, in my old age, I'm getting satisfaction that I could live so long.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, good. Do you think, how do you think it affected you, in other words, coming here when you were practically eighteen years old and you had to start all over again?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Learn the language and everything. How did that, did that make a difference in you? In your personality, in the way you look at things, the way you think about things. What difference did it make the fact that you came here, compared with, say you had stayed where you were?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, well now, I don't know nothing, ya know, that was different. But [not understood] I go to store. I couldn't buy something over [not understood] couple dollars in your hand and there's something. That, that's, uh-

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, that's the only thing I-

LEVINE: Well did your husband, did your husband like working in the mines? Did he not like it?

MATKOVICH: Well yeah, they would, like it if we, somebody else came then work outside and prefer mine. Because he didn't like heat and he wasn't [not understood] in the mine in the summertime. It was nice and cool.

LEVINE: (laughs)

MATKOVICH: And then he learn, tricks. He wasn't, ya know, working those, what they call, loading coal. He was, uh, putting tracks where those rail cars were going in the mine. (laughs) And some time in [not understood]. I don't think it was [not understood], ya know. (both laugh) So that was a crazy man work. (both laugh)

LEVINE: Yeah, so, when you would get together with other people who worked in the mines and the wives and husbands would get together, what would you do for enjoyment?

MATKOVICH: [not understood], rarely happened. I can still think nothing of it. Unless we went to town together, pay our bills, maybe have cup of coffee and go back to home. That's it.

LEVINE: Show? Go to a show? Would you go to a movie?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, went to movies. Have to, ya know, I was already, yeah, I even work little bit in factory.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: And resting house when that was already second war.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: [not understood] yeah.

LEVINE: How bout the depression? Do you remember when the depression happened?

MATKOVICH: Oh yeah now I do. I remember real, real good.

LEVINE: Tell me how it affected you.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, well, ya know, they think "Why? What is this?" in the country that we- And some people never paid them. It was really bad, bad, bad. But the, again, there would be [not understood], help each other or help a store. They'll be get credit or, ya know, my special family, we wasn't hungry. We wasn't, ya know, eating big stack or go to restaurant or things like that. Still don't.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And, uh, but, ya know, like I said, I make my own bread. We make big garden. We have a lot of vegetable. We can stuff. I learn how to can and everything like we do my aunt's house.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MATKOVICH: Yes. It wasn't-

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Big garden

MATKOVICH: Just keep on going. (laughs)

JOHN: Big garden.

MATKOVICH: Yeah a garden. Man, [not understood] as ever. But they had to [not understood], my god, everything, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, and did your husband work through the depression? Or did he get laid off?

MATKOVICH: No, he wasn't laid off. He was [not understood] but then another person would get a job. When the mine wasn't working everyday. He just had to watch, watch and see, cause he say "Go to work tomorrow. I'm gonna work tomorrow!" Ya know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: About two, three days, whatever. And then in forties and fifties, that been better. And then, we went, to time in Europe. Visit [not understood] three time, yeah. So, yeah.

LEVINE: Were you taking in boarders during that time?

MATKOVICH: No, the last, no it was during when I first come.

LEVINE: When you first came.

MATKOVICH: At the last time, my kids and we have nice little house.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Was there a Croatian newspaper that you would get?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, I would get this from lunch and it was not one that I was getting from New York harbor (?). I didn't know everything in it. We were always keeping touch, always writing, ya know, in Europe. Always.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So when did your mother come over?

MATKOVICH: She didn't never come.

LEVINE: Oh she never came?

MATKOVICH: Never, never see her for twenty-eight years. And she die and that was it.

LEVINE: But you went back one time before she died?

MATKOVICH: No. I wasn't getting ready. That was when I was twenty, when I was going like in the spring. They didn't tell me she die. She got stroke. And then she die.

LEVINE: Oh. Yeah. So how bout World War II? Do you remember, do you remember the build up to World War II? And how bout your husband? Did he have to go in the-

MATKOVICH: No, no he was already, ya know, overage. My oldest son went.

LEVINE: Oh your oldest son went?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, one that die, yeah. He was a Navy.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. (long pause) And do you remember when the war was over?

MATKOVICH: The, uh, last one or?

LEVINE: Yeah, the last one. World War II.

MATKOVICH: Well, yeah. I remember, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, but-

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Can I?

LEVINE: Yeah, sure.

JOHN: Ma, do you remember the day whenever they said World War II-

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: When the war was over. Where was you at that day? Where were you?

MATKOVICH: Uh, was over my granting [not understood]

JOHN: No, that was-

MATKOVICH: That was two. (?)

JOHN: When they said "The war is over today."

MATKOVICH: Oh.

JOHN: Where was you at that day? Where were you? Did you go to the movie that day or something? Or no?

LEVINE: When you heard the news that the war was over, do you remember hearing that news?

MATKOVICH: Oh yeah, they be, uh-huh. That's on the air. Me and [not understood] was in the movies. Yeah, yeah. Yeah and when it got late they was driving in the Ford, taking me and another friend. Yeah, that was-

JOHN: You was in the movie that day when they, they announced it at the-

MATKOVICH: Yeah, it was in the air.

JOHN: Yeah, what did they say?

MATKOVICH: And uh, I mean, I see I don't, I don't remember. Oh, they ask first for the younger boys, uh, paper bill boys. That was the first thing, yeah.

LEVINE: They asked for, paper boys?

MATKOVICH: Yes and the paper boy was there to get up right away and come out.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. (both laugh)

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-

END SIDE A, TAPE ONE. BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE ONE

LEVINE: And was everybody excited?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, excited because when the mine explosion that was first thing, they get you. [not understood] And, [not understood]

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: And I remember my-

LEVINE: Yeah. Um, OK, let's see. So, now you're having a good life now, now that you're older.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. And retired. (laughs)

LEVINE: And you don't have to work.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. Yeah. I can't believe that I'm living this long. I don't know why.

LEVINE: Well I see-

MATKOVICH: I've been to more carbs (?) through my life. I was in Europe when, maybe seven, eight years old. I was baby-sitting. I was holding the baby in my lap and woman go get a water or mix her bread or

something. Oh she don't, she don't need a, she don't hold a baby in a (laughs) and I was-

LEVINE: So now you're ninety-six? Are you ninety-six?

MATKOVICH: Ninety-(laughs) seven.

LEVINE: Ninety-seven.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, and about in couple of months, I'll be ninety-eight.

LEVINE: Wow. (both laugh) Good for you.

MATKOVICH: Too many, too many.

LEVINE: So, tell, what do you attribute your fine old age to?

MATKOVICH: (laughs)

LEVINE: Why do you think you're living and you look so healthy and strong?

MATKOVICH: I don't know. (both laugh) I don't know. Maybe good food or something.

LEVINE: And hard work maybe.

MATKOVICH: Maybe, yeah.

LEVINE: (laughs). So do you have any other, you have your sister still.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, she is, only one sister, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah. And so, let's see, you went from New Jersey to West Virginia.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then when did you leave West Virginia? How long have you been- did you come right to Florida from West Virginia?

MATKOVICH: No, we went to Michigan. Went to Michigan.

LEVINE: Michigan.

MATKOVICH: 1960, yeah.

LEVINE: And how long did ya stay in Michigan?

MATKOVICH: To '74, '75, yeah.

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Something like that.

LEVINE: Yeah. So was your husband alive when you were in Michigan?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, he was retired.

LEVINE: Retired.

MATKOVICH: Yeah. Now we stay for awhile. My older son got, pass away. And uh, we bought a cute little home for ourselves. And it was nice. He got granted, and that was for him, first time to live in West Virginia, because he love that place. He was hoping it was, know, he know everybody. He was thinking going to city how he was get- but he get a fine. He got granted to three or four older men like him, coming from different, ya know, times.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And they was play some kind of cards or [not understood]- I give up the work and things like that. We was so content, yeah.

LEVINE: So why did you happen to go to Michigan? Why did you happen to go there?

MATKOVICH: Because my, my sons moved to when they finish over there. They come to Michigan. They got work and we didn't want to stay by ourselves. And just, ya know, my husband was little bit sick. And uh, been to take, ya know, they was running home every Sunday almost. And, uh, we just move to Michigan because of our kids.

LEVINE: I see, uh-huh. So you have two sons.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: You have one son now.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: And do you have grandchildren?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. I have a grandson, that he have three sons.

LEVINE: Oh. So you have great-grandchildren?

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow.

MATKOVICH: And uh, my-

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Then he has a daughter.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, three, yeah. Even he had a three- my grandson had three sons. And they, he staying there in Michigan. He's a school teacher. And uh, well his three sons are married already. That's my great-great grand-

LEVINE: Great-great granddaughter?

MATKOVICH: Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh my goodness, good for you. Wow! (laughs) Um, OK, let's see. Well, when you were a little girl growing up and you had the dream of coming to this country, do you feel like you've found the American dream? Or it was different than you expected?

MATKOVICH: Different than I expected. (both laugh) Oh, big difference.

LEVINE: Why don't you say-

MATKOVICH: See when you in Europe, you think that everybody's rich in America. Cause well, those guys that come back, well they have that brown suit and white collar, ya know. And silk shirt. You think "Oh my! They millionaires" (laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: But when you got here, it wasn't like that?

MATKOVICH: No, it's completely different. (laughs)

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: But still better than over there, yeah.

LEVINE: When you went back, when you went back to your country-

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: How did it strike you seeing it again after all those years?

MATKOVICH: Well, there wasn't too bad already, and I went 1952 back. And then it start getting better, ya know. Yeah, that was- well, people was already different and homes. Yeah, eh, it wasn't too bad compared when I was young and the [not understood].

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you, did you ever think you might like to go back and stay there?

MATKOVICH: No stay. I went couple times, but not to live forever, no.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: I want to come back.

LEVINE: OK. Well, um, we're getting close to the end of the tape. Is there anything maybe that I haven't asked you that I should've or that you would like to talk about? Relative to growing up, coming here, starting a new life, uh, raising your family?

MATKOVICH: No, no that's, yeah, that's something, that's all.

LEVINE: How bout you John? Is there anything you want, I mean, maybe growing up in West Virginia in the mining town, maybe there's something that you remember?

JOHN: Yeah. I can, well, you mention the fact that during the Depression, I can remember when I was in kindergarten. And we were living, of course, in, in Gerry [ph], West Virginia.

MATKOVICH: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

JOHN: Mom, you forgot to mention that. I was going to kindergarten.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: And during that time, uh, I think, well President Roosevelt was elected to office. And Ms. Roosevelt came through our small village.

LEVINE: Wow.

JOHN: And uh, I guess the kindergarten teacher notified the mothers to be present that day. And we were all standing, small children standing there-

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: In front of our mothers. And she came through- Ms. Roosevelt came through and touched each one of us on the head.

LEVINE: Oh! Wow.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, talk to me. Says, Ms. Roosevelt. See, I forgot that. I was standing up and he was in front of me. And she pet his head and shook hands with me. She said "You got nice little boy there."

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: And [not understood] I was so scared! I didn't know what to say.  
(laughs)

LEVINE: Well that must've meant a lot to, to both of you.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Yeah, really did.

LEVINE: Yeah, wow.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, they uh, it was like a, like shanty [ph], ya know, where there were line. And, they built that for people when there was a strike, when company throw you out of their houses. And this, strikers was living there. Then after that, there was different. But when Ms. Roosevelt went to it, she water and naturally money whatever. They rebuilt that shantys and fix it, ya know, a little bit nicer.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: That's where the kids went his age for, yeah, there was ya know, underage. And that was, stay there half a day. And then we would make them take a nap and things like that. (laughs) Yeah, it was nice. Had beds like soldiers, ya know. It was cute. It was nice.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, wow. Well, um, did, is there anything else John that you can think of? Relative to the mines and to life in the mining community?

JOHN: Well, uh, ya know, the mining area there, I think that my mother mentioned the fact that there was always that possibility of what they called the mine explosion. The mine blowing up. And uh, ya know, that happened occasionally. It did happen. And we lived near a town where there was so many miners killed. A town called Minoga [ph] West Virginia. And I think the largest number of miners at one mine explosion were killed at that mine. And that was in 1907, I think.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

JOHN: So that's what you always, uh, I guess that they had that in mind. Because if they were going down, ya know, in where my dad worked. He went down, I don't know, maybe couple hundred feet into the ground.

MATKOVICH: [not understood]

JOHN: And you never knew if they would be coming back or not, really. Because if something did happen, your chances are very slim of getting out. But anyway, I think, um, and he spent, what, like forty-five years in mine. But my mother has been, I think she has derived a lot of benefits because of my dad working in the coal mines. And that's where we got your name and address and everything. Because of the fact that, uh, it was in the coal miner's journal. And your name was there and that's why we got, ya know-

LEVINE: In touch.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: With you. And I think that she has, she has been blessed, you might say, because of the medication, everything that the miners work for, that the miner's widows are able to get.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

JOHN: Along with some bit of a pension. So I think from that standpoint, ya know, the time and effort that my dad put in the coal mines, is that she is deriving the benefits from all that time that he put in.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

JOHN: And they've been very, very nice and I guess the only thing that we could say about the United Mine Workers is "God bless America" and "God bless the United Mine Workers."

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, that's true.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, do you think-

MATKOVICH: He had that, uh, what they call black lung, ya know.

LEVINE: That's what your husband had?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, then, yeah, I guess. See I get from a union, I get, what the call, ya know, small-

LEVINE: Pension.

MATKOVICH: Widow pension.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: And then I get that, from [not understood] Company, black lung, what they call? And then get my Social Security. That was all, ya know, to him. And through his name, to his work.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did your husband know he had black lung when he left the mines?

MATKOVICH: Well, he did. They were, ya know, talk. Then when they start, then when they start this, about this pension then they call each one, ya know, and give them a-

LEVINE: appointment (?)

MATKOVICH: Deal with a doctor. And they take X-rays and yeah.

JOHN: I don't know that any of them knew exactly that they had it. But, ya know, working in that environment so many years, that there was just the strong possibility that there-

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: And then I remember, ya know, my dad going to the, to the doctor and then finally it was determined that he had black lung.

LEVINE: Oh.

JOHN: And then of course there had to be a lot of papers and everything else that we had to fill out and send in. Because he, that didn't take

place until we, he was, well, my mother, we were all living in Michigan.

LEVINE: Oh ok.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah.

JOHN: And then we found that out.

MATKOVICH: In '60, we move in Michigan. And then, ya know, (trails off) fifty

LEVINE: In the fifties you moved to Michigan?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah. When they, ya know, that decide then on first. (?) And men working forty-five years in a mine, naturally deserve some.

LEVINE: Right, right.

MATKOVICH: So that wasn't, ya know-

LEVINE: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: Right. So did your father, express the opinion that he did not want his sons to work in a coal mine?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, yeah he said

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Strong, very strong.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, he was strong. No, no, no. Don't you dare go around the mine. Don't you dare start working in a mine. No, yeah.

JOHN: Cause I told him when I was, well, when I was in high school and I played sports. And we knew, I knew the superintendent's son. And I'd gotten a job. He said, I went home and told my dad I got a job in the mines. And he said "Doing what?" and I said "Working inside." And he said "No, no. You're not going in the mine."

MATKOVICH: Yeah. He had no [not understood]

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MATKOVICH: See, before the last mine that he leave when he retire. And there was another mine. He was working there before. But after he quit, explosion. (aside) That number nine.

JOHN: Yeah.

MATKOVICH: (aside) In Farmington. Yeah. Really, killed good bit of man, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now how about the mine worker's journal? Was that something that your father read? Was that active while he was still working in the mine?

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Ya know, I don't recall. I don't recall. But I know that now that we get it, (laughs) and I read it, ya know, and yeah. I don't know, ya know, I just don't recall if he'd ever even seen them. I don't know if they even had it out then.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

JOHN: But uh-

MATKOVICH: Yeah, I guess the coal miners or their relatives or their family, whoever. But a couple time was, ya know, ask if you want it, ya know. You answer right away "Yes. I want it." [not understood] heard about different miners and things and towns. That's nice.

LEVINE: Yeah.

JOHN: [not understood]

MATKOVICH: Because it brings memories.

LEVINE: You enjoy having it?

MATKOVICH: Yeah, I can't read it now. My eyes are real bad.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah.

MATKOVICH: But he read it and-

JOHN: I, in fact, we're waiting on the next one to come out.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, we waiting for one now.

JOHN Cause I sent in an article.

LEVINE: Oh.

JOHN: And I hope it's, ya know, going to be published.

MATKOVICH: Again, [not understood].

LEVINE: Well, what's the article?

JOHN: Uh, it's about, well actually it's about the help that United Mine Workers gave my mother. And the fact that, ya know, they take care of all her medication and everything else medically, ya know. Going to the doctor and-

LEVINE: That's great.

JOHN: It's just been great, that she-

MATKOVICH: Yeah, that's, ya know-

JOHN: [not understood]

MATKOVICH: My daughter (?) goes, [not understood] the oldest one, to doctor now so she'll be better. And the medicine cost so much.

LEVINE: Oh yeah.

MATKOVICH: And I don't have to pay a penny!

LEVINE: Great.

MATKOVICH: That comes to my mailbox too. Don't even, just have to call the place and they send you.

LEVINE: Well, when it does come out, it would be nice to have a copy of it and put it in your mother's folder at Ellis Island.

JOHN: (heard off microphone) Oh.

LEVINE: Since we have the interview, it would be nice.

JOHN: Oh, ya know, I sent it in some time ago. And we've (laughs)

LEVINE: It maybe just be what they have on the docket-

JOHN: Yeah.

LEVINE: to go in. But I'm sure it will go in at time, point.

JOHN: Yeah. We've just been kinda looking for it. I guess when you left [not understood]

LEVINE: It's gonna come. (both laugh) Well let me ask you a final question. Do you feel like you have some kind of a, what do I want to say?- heritage or some- That you father, having been a miner, had an impact on you?

JOHN: Well, yeah. I think to a certain degree. And then the fact is that I had a lot of friends that worked in the mines, ya know. That I grew up. That I spent quite a bit of time, ya know. People that we used to vacation with that worked in there. He worked in a coal mine and everything. And so, I guess there is a strong commitment, ya know, once you're from that area. You still remember. In fact, I still have my dad's, what they call, a hardhat. I still have that.

LEVINE: Oh. Hmm

JOHN: Why? I don't know why I keep that. But I still have it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

JOHN: There's just a, you heard so much about it, ya know, and it's the area that you come from. And just it instilled within yourself. I don't know how else to tell ya.

LEVINE: Yeah.

JOHN: I know I've never, I've never been in a mine, ya know. And I was fortunate from that standpoint that I didn't go in. Because I had friends that had close experiences about getting killed, ya know, in the mines. And what they call a, a mine, explosion or slide or cave in.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

JOHN: Whatever the terminology. Uh, I've, I've heard that from a lot of my friends, ya know, that a, that had that experience. But I never did. I don't, I don't regret it, ya know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

JOHN: Don't regret it one bit. In fact, I'm glad that the uh, that I didn't go back for that (laughs) job that I had.

LEVINE: Yeah.

JOHN: Had been promised, so uh, but, no there's-

MATKOVICH: Yeah, well, we have, we have a family that's obviously have deeper friendship.

LEVINE: Oh OK.

MATKOVICH: And their, ya know, kids and grandkids [not understood]

JOHN: And then see, my wife's grandfather was killed in the coal mines.  
And then-

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: Her father worked in the coal mines-

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: All those years and everything. So, uh, he was, he was getting black lung also. So it was, it was a common thing. That, ya know, if you spent so many years, I guess in (laughs), underground

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

JOHN: That you're bound to have it. Because it wasn't, I guess it wasn't dealt with properly in the early stages, early, early years of the coal miners that they worked in there.

MATKOVICH: Well there's a lot of time, ya know, before sewer. When I come from Europe, that ya know, [not understood] or something. But

their sons, ya know, we have a, in town of Morgantown [ph], down in Pheramond [ph], beautiful college.

LEVINE: Oh.

MATKOVICH: Lot of kids went to that college. And uh-

JOHN: Oh yeah. There was, the opportunity was there.

MATKOVICH: And uh

JOHN: Ya know, if you so desired. And if you could, had the initiative to go. It was entirely up to the individual. Um, some of them wanted to go, some didn't. Some were quite successful. I know I've had, ya know, friends that have gone through that I went to high school with. They're maybe lawyers or-

MATKOVICH: Yeah, lawyers.

JOHN: Doctors, whatever, but uh-

MATKOVICH: See, ya know, they have opportunity, who like it. There are boys that make dinners. There's the boys that doctors. And that the way you know, the family, ya know, and all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MATKOVICH: Yeah, that's, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. OK, well we're at the end of the tape. And I want to thank you for a beautiful interview.

MATKOVICH: OK, thank you. (laughs)

LEVINE: I've been speaking with Neda Matkovich and her son John Matkovich.

MATKOVICH: Yeah.

LEVINE: And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And I'm signing off.

END OF INTERVIEW