

EI-26

LUIGI MORELLI

BIRTH DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 1897

INTERVIEW DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 1991

RUNNING TIME: 59:41

INTERVIEWER: CARLO SCISSURA

RECORDING ENGINEER: PETER HOM

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND RECORDING STUDIO

TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY: CARLO SCISSURA, 6/1991

TRANSCRIPT RECONCEIVED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, 3/1995

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

ITALY, 1920

AGE 23

SHIP: THE PATRIA

PORT: NAPLES

RESIDENCES:

- **ITALY: ISCHIA**
- **US: NY, NY**

SCISSURA: This is Carlo Scissura for the National Park Service. It is Friday, February 22nd and I'm here with Luigi Morelli, who came from Italy in 1920. O.K., can you please tell us your full name.

MORELLI: Luigi Morelli.

SCISSURA: Luigi Morelli. And when were you born?

MORELLI: 1897.

SCISSURA: 1897.

MORELLI: February 9, 1897.

SCISSURA: O.K., and where were you born?

MORELLI: In Italy.

SCISSURA: Italy. What part of Italy?

MORELLI: Island. Island Ischia.

SCISSURA: Ischia. And that's in Naples?

MORELLI: Near Naples.

SCISSURA: Near Naples.

MORELLI: Provincia di Naples.

SCISSURA: Provincia of Naples. Can you tell me a little bit about Ischia? What was Ischia like?

MORELLI: Oh, island.

SCISSURA: It was an island.

MORELLI: Now, big tourist.

SCISSURA: Tourists.

MORELLI: When I left, two hotels. Now 127.

SCISSURA: And your mother and father lived in Ischia, also?

MORELLI: My father, oh yeah, in that time, yeah, live. All die, know what I mean.

SCISSURA: And what was your mother's name?

MORELLI: My mother's name, Rosa.

SCISSURA: And your father's name?

MORELLI: Giuseppe.

SCISSURA: Giuseppe. And did you have any brothers or sisters?

MORELLI: I have six brother and three sisters.

SCISSURA: So you were ten kids all together.

MORELLI: And five my mother can't get them.

SCISSURA: Oh, she lost the babies for five.

MORELLI: The first five. I'm the first; I'm the first in family.

SCISSURA: Oh, you're the oldest.

MORELLI: The oldest, yeah.

SCISSURA: And do you remember their names? Your brother's names?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. You wanna my name brothers. Guiseppe, Giovanni, Giro, Biaggio e Antonio.

SCISSURA: O.K. And your sisters.

MORELLI: Peppinella, Peppinella, Anna e Maria.

SCISSURA: And Maria. O.K. Were you the first person to come to the United States? Were you the first person to come to America?

MORELLI: From, from my family? Yes, the first one.

SCISSURA: You were the first one.

MORELLI: First one.

MORELLI: Nothing.

SCISSURA: Nothing.

MORELLI: Because I finish the, what you call "the sail" and I can't find a job, we come over here. And that time I pay a few dollar over there just, you know, for come over here, America.

SCISSURA: Did your father work?

MORELLI: My father was sick.

SCISSURA: He was sick.

MORELLI: Rheumatism.

MORELLI: Oh, was in bed all time.

CARLO: And your mother?

MORELLI: Poor mother, you know what I mean. He try, he try sell little fruit on the street.

SCISSURA: Right. Try and make some money.

MORELLI: A "fama."

SCISSURA: A "fama," no food, hunger.

MORELLI: Ah, la fama. Eh.

SCISSURA: What type of house did you live in? How was your house? Was it a big house or was it an apartment?

MORELLI: Well, you know, small house, you know what I mean. Small house. Two big room, you know. These two big room have everything. My father, he buy this some years ago and only pay a few dollars. And he make, what you call, a little kitchen outside. If it no was for me over here he lose, he lose, he lose the house. Because when he make the kitchen, you know, a little bit kitchen outside the, there was a kitchen before everything have in two room. Make the kitchen and make a little, little, what you call, little mortgage on, you know what I mean. If I no was over here, he lose the house.

SCISSURA: So you weren't working then in Italy?

MORELLI: Me, no. No work. I was, I was working before I go, I go in a sailor. When I come back, no work. Me and friend of mine decide for come in the United States.

SCISSURA: And tell me a little bit, what did you used to do in Ischia? What was there to do there?

MORELLI: What I do little of everything. What I can get. I work on the, on the..eh, I mean, you know what I mean, like "como di case, chille che fanno i case." Work over there, you know what I mean?

SCISSURA: Che cosa?

MORELLI: Work in the ca...you know what I mean, like help the bricklayer. Help, help.

SCISSURA: O.K., O.K., so people who build, like construction.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: Helping with construction. O.K.

MORELLI: That's all.

SCISSURA: And that was all there was to do?

MORELLI: And, and no, after a grocery store he hire me deliver some stuff all over the island, you know what I mean, with a little, a little wagon with a little jackass. I deliver. This was a little bit, one of the first, one big grocery. In Ischia he furnish three, four little store.

SCISSURA: So you were doing deliveries there.

MORELLI: I deliver. And, besides, have some kind of soldier over there. I deliver the grocery for the soldier.

SCISSURA: Right, but there really wasn't much money being made.

MORELLI: Nothing. I mean, I remember my brother can't buy a pair of shoes he buy with wood on the bottom.

SCISSURA: And what did your brothers do?

MORELLI: My brothers all small.

SCISSURA: Oh, they were children.

MORELLI: All children, all small.

SCISSURA: And your sisters, they were children, also?

MORELLI: All was, all was small. I was the big one in the family. I was the boss of family.

SCISSURA: You were the boss of the family. O.K., sure, since your father was sick.

MORELLI: And one time my father and mother go out on the morning that I make. At that time my father was a little bit all right, you know, when I was young. And in the morning he tell me do this, do the other. Nobody want to work. My sister was next to me, you know what I mean. And one time my sister, instead of sleeping, say, "We got to do this." I told her, "Pappa vene a mi mazzatte." (Papa comes and we'll get hit). And my sister don't want to get up in the morning. I take match, I take the blinds off and I put match underneath her feet. My sister jumps from the bed. When my father come back, she told my father in the night. When he come back, my father, pretty near kill me. He give me so much, so much the

police got to come along to bring me to the doctor. He hit me so much. The police come along and bring me to the doctor. I was all right in ten days. If I no was, no was all right in ten days, lock them up my father.

SCISSURA: Oh, my God.

MORELLI: When I, when I go in school, when I go in school, the second grade, the name of the teacher was Vincenzo Mirabella. And he told all the class when you see me on the street, on the night, anytime you see in the street, tell, "Good morning, Boss. Good morning." (Carlo laughs) Good morning. Good morning. And I see the teacher one time, I never say, "Good morning, " you know what I mean.

SCISSURA: So you were a little devil, then.

MORELLI: I, no I forget, the next day when I go on the school, he call me. "Come her. You see me last night?" "Yeah, teacher." I want to find an excuse. "Come here." He put me on top of this boy. All over the, all over the school, you know. He had me on the ass. So much hurry up I pee on this boy because this boy he do before, then me. When I go home I tell my father, father the teacher pow!

SCISSURA: He hit you right in the face.

MORELLI: He hit me on the face. Throw me on the floor.

SCISSURA: Oh, my God.

MORELLI: And you know what I mean.

SCISSURA: Sure. So you had a lot of respect for your mother and father?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. That time you be surprised. And the teacher says he do something

wrong. The teacher, he says, the teacher he no hit you for nothing. He do something wrong. If he, if you was allright, the teacher never hit you on the ass. You pee on top of the other...

SCISSURA: Oh, God.

MORELLI: You know, otherwise the teacher.

SCISSURA: Yeah.

MORELLI: And the teacher was the, what you call, better then, have a command better than family, mother and father. The teacher.

SCISSURA: He was just as, better than the mother and the father.

MORELLI: I learn, I learn lot of things, lot of things on teacher. And no forget, he says," Bye-bye. You be big one." Excuse me, I talk. "Bye-bye. You are big one." Remember, anything happen. You small now. When anything happen when you big. (he becomes emotional) Think thirty second what can happen after.

SCISSURA: Sure. So you learned a lot from the teacher.

MORELLI: One time what happened to me. One time I have a little thing, you know what I mean, a little thing, give, save some money. And my brother, one of the smaller one, gonna play on this, this thing. Have a little bit older, day, you know day...

SCISSURA: Right, day.

MORELLI: Keep money. Paper money. Money that time was a, I take my, I take my brother. I want to throw through the fire escape. I think the teacher. Oh, my father kill me. I throw on the floor. He was small, you know what I mean. I was a

little bit big. I save this money penny at a time, penny at a time and I put over there.

SCISSURA: So the teacher taught you how to think before you do something, then.

MORELLI: The teacher, I remember that time, I think my brother, what I think, my father kill me. I throw him, instead of throw him outside I throw him on the floor. Oh, big, big thing.

SCISSURA: And when did you leave school?

MORELLI: My mother pull me from the school. If I no there, she put me on the work.

SCISSURA: She had to put you to work.

MORELLI: Nine years.

SCISSURA: Do you remember?

MORELLI: Nine years old.

SCISSURA: So you went to school until you were nine. So that was the third grade or fourth grade.

MORELLI: Start on the morning, start on the morning four o'clock, this was summertime. And the night, when it was dark, nine o'clock, I go home. On the end I had twenty cents on the end of the week.

SCISSURA: So you made twenty cents in one week.

MORELLI: Well, the American, we talk American money.

SCISSURA: Right. American money.

MORELLI: You know what I mean, that time.

SCISSURA: Twenty cents. So it was tough times then.

MORELLI: Very tough time.

SCISSURA: Now let me ask you a question.

MORELLI: It, oh, excuse me...

SCISSURA: No, go ahead.

MORELLI: She can't buy a little coffee, my mother, can't buy, oh very, very...

SCISSURA: She couldn't buy coffee. She couldn't buy anything.

MORELLI: She can't. Nothing, nothing, nothing. One time we have a, we have a, we have olive, we have no olive oil. My father, he think he buy two hundred pounds dry chestnuts.

SCISSURA: Dry chestnuts.

MORELLI: When the dry chestnuts with a lot of water in there he put spaghetti, he no need, he no need oil.

SCISSURA: Oil. So you made your own.

MORELLI: You know what I mean. Eat this sweet stuff.

SCISSURA: Right, right. So what did you used to eat at night? I mean when it came time to have dinner or when you used to eat?

MORELLI: Over there?

SCISSURA: Yeah, over there. What did you used to eat on the, what was on the table, little piece of bread. Little piece of bread, little piece of bread, dry bread. She cook them, she give a little soup at night with this bread.

SCISSURA: Little soup with the bread. So there wasn't much food then?

MORELLI: Please.

SCISSURA: No.

MORELLI: When I, when I, when I remember, oh Madonna, I get sick. The stuff, the stuff we see over here.

SCISSURA: Sure, it's different. Were your parents very religious? Did they go to church often?

ORELLI: Oh, yeah. Oh, my mother. Yeah, on a Sunday go in a church, he gotta have no shoes, flat shoes. One time I hit the stone, the blood on this, on this.

SCISSURA: On your foot.

MORELLI: Was on Sunday. We had to wash a feet to go in church. Sunday. Did all the children go to church? Did all the children go to church?

MORELLI: Oh, oh, that time we gotta, on, um, what day, uh, one day on the week you have a special priest. You gotta go over there. You a learn everything about the

church. You know what I mean? U Credo, u Padre Nostro, Ave Maria...

SCISSURA: Right, right. All the prayers you got to learn.

MORELLI: Oh, at that, that time was very, service, we gotta go church.

SCISSURA: You had to go to church every week.

MORELLI: I remember one time, 1908. The mission, the mission, the mission, you know, missionary.

SCISSURA: Right, the missionary.

MORELLI: Missionary. Come on my place and every night my mother send me on this people. What happen one night. This mission, he bring sand inside on a big trunk. I was over there. No seat. The church was full. And this mission he go on top of the pulpit, you know, pulpits, you know, pulpits.

SCISSURA: Right, on the, on the pulpit, yeah.

MORELLI: He start holler, "Dove stai?" The people, they listen to over there, too. "Dove stai? Madonna, dove stai?"

SCISSURA: He was yelling, "Where are you? Where are you?"

MORELLI: "Dove stai? Dove stai?" What happen, where are you. "Perche non viene?" The door was closed. And this missionary, when he brings this sand, this sand. He bring a big trunk. Nobody knows what happen, what happen. He start holler. The light start go out. I never see when...and the same time the doors open with this, with this, with this sand. Four people carry this sand on the top of their shoulder.

SCISSURA: They were carrying this sand on their shoulder.

MORELLI: Yeah, you know. Big thing like this. The sand was on top. All the light, you know, all the light. Madonna Mia! The sand really started coming in. The priest, he start to holler. This was 1908.

SCISSURA: 1908, O.K.

MORELLI: And I was near a pole, one pole like this. Pretty near kill me. (They laugh) The people upside down, the chair, they think it was real, you know, you know what I mean? Real sand come in.

SCISSURA: Right. They thought he was a saint.

MORELLI: nobody knows anything, you know. They, they be surprised. When I come, when I reach over here.

SCISSURA: Yeah. Why did you decide to come over here? I mean, you said it was very...

MORELLI: A fama, a fama.

SCISSURA: There was no food. O.K.

MORELLI: No food, no work.

SCISSURA: Now you said you and your friend came here. Did you say you came with a friend or you came by yourself?

MORELLI: No, friend, with friend we leave over there, with friend together.

SCISSURA: Oh, you lived with a friend?

MORELLI: Oh, from Italy we leave with the friend and we come over here. When we pass over there, someplace, he give me a piece of chalk. Somebody hold me up and bring me over here.

SCISSURA: Right. Let's go back a little bit. You're still in Ischia and you decided to come to America, right?

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: So did your family come also?

MORELLI: No, they never come, no.

SCISSURA: No, your family didn't come.

MORELLI: Only me.

SCISSURA: Oh, you were the only one who came.

MORELLI: Yeah. The other two in Buenos Aires, two more Buenos Aires.

SCISSURA: Oh, you have two in Buenos Aires.

MORELLI: Now I got another one over there in California.

SCISSURA: In California.

MORELLI: After some year, so many years.

SCISSURA: O.K. Now you left from Ischia and where did you go after you left Ischia? You had to take a boat?

MORELLI: Well, you got the little boat from Ischia to Naples.

SCISSURA: From Ischia to Naples.

MORELLI: From Naples, regular boat come over here.

SCISSURA: Right. Now, when you left Ischia, was it sad to say good-bye to your family? I mean, were you upset when you said good-bye to your mother, to your father?

MORELLI: Expect when we, you know what I mean, make a little money; I come back over there a little, a little later.

SCISSURA: So what did your parents say to you when you told them you wanted to come to America?

MORELLI: What did my family...?

SCISSURA: What did they tell you? (He coughs) Excuse me, when you...

MORELLI: Go ahead.

SCISSURA: They told you to go ahead.

MORELLI: Make a few dollars.

SCISSURA: Make a few dollars, yeah, 'cause there was no money there.

MORELLI: No money, no money.

SCISSURA: Was there anybody else from Ischia who came to America before you?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. Plenty.

SCISSURA: Plenty of people.

MORELLI: All, all over there, especially from Ischia was plenty. Especially lot of people in California.

SCISSURA: In California. Did they ever come back to Ischia? When you were small do you remember if American people came to...

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. Lot of people.

SCISSURA: And what did they say about America?

MORELLI: Oh, they can't close their mouths about America. You know, find one, one, one city like that. I was in Russia six months when I was a sailor. Turkey, Greek, that's when I was a cook over there.

SCISSURA: So you traveled a little bit

MORELLI: I feel pretty good when I was in the Navy.

SCISSURA: You were in the Navy in Italy?

MORELLI: Yeah, Navy three years. I was a cook over there.

SCISSURA: That was before you came to America.

MORELLI: Before I came to America.

SCISSURA: And the people who came to Ischia who were already living in America, did they say that America was beautiful or that there was a lot of money here?

MORELLI: Nobody talk against America.

SCISSURA: Nobody talked against America.

MORELLI: All, all, even myself, just I can't talk, I live over here. One time somebody told me, "What's the matter? You be citizen." I be, sure. America give me all the money, come. I make a few trip in Italy, you know what I mean? I was, I make a trip in Argentina.

SCISSURA: So you took the boat from Ischia, you went to Naples.

MORELLI: Yeah, Naples you got a regular boat.

SCISSURA: And in Naples there was another boat to come to America.

MORELLI: Yeah. We take, we take the passaport.

SCISSURA: You had your passport.

MORELLI: I pay; I pay a few dollars, too.

SCISSURA: Do you remember how much you paid to come?

MORELLI: I don't know. I forget. We buy some money. Gold money we had to pay over there. He mark this stamp, this stamp on the passport.

SCISSURA: Right, that you had paid.

MORELLI: Gotta pay.

SCISSURA: How did you get this money to pay for the trip, because you said there was no money?

MORELLI: My mother give me. My father had a few money.

SCISSURA: They had a few dollars and they gave it to you.

MORELLI: Yeah, that's all they give.

SCISSURA: Do you remember the name of the boat?

MORELLI: "Patria."

SCISSURA: "Patria."

MORELLI: French line.

SCISSURA: It was a French line. O.K. Where, so it was you and your friend from Ischia, right?

MORELLI: We come on the boat?

SCISSURA: Were there other people people from Ischia?

MORELLI: Well, have some more, but we have no, no friends.

SCISSURA: You weren't friends with them?

MORELLI: Special friend, this best friend, Benemino Scotti.

SCISSURA: Benemino Scotti.

MORELLI: Scotti. Benemino Scotti, my friend.

SCISSURA: Was it very crowded in Naples? I mean by the ship were there a lot of people?

MORELLI: Fill them up.

SCISSURA: Filled up. Mostly all Italian people?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. All Italian people.

SCISSURA: All Italian people.

MORELLI: All Italian people, yeah. And fill, on the boat no bed, something one on top of the other.

SCISSURA: Where did you sleep on the boat?

MORELLI: Big hall, you know, big hall.

SCISSURA: There was like a big hall.

MORELLI: Yeah, big. Lucky we find pretty good weather, you know. When find bad weather, close everything on top. You close on the bottom.

SCISSURA: Right, so you were on the bottom of the ship.

MORELLI: On the bottom of the ship.

SCISSURA: And what did you sleep on? Were there beds or did you sleep on the floor?

MORELLI: No, you have some kind of first, second, you know, like a scale, like.

SCISSURA: Like bunk beds.

MORELLI: Yeah, one, two, pass three, you know what I mean? In case of rough sea. The, what you call it, the ship, you know, you can't go out.

SCISSURA: So there were a lot of people on the bottom of the ship.

MORELLI: You, you ought to see the toilet that time.

MORELLI: Uph!

SCISSURA: It was bad?

MORELLI: Everybody go over there. They don't give a shit. That time, that time travel like, what you call, animals like.

SCISSURA: Like animals.

MORELLI: You gotta take your own food, you know what I mean?

SCISSURA: Oh, you had to bring your own food with you?

MORELLI: Oh, you gotta take. No, you go over there, gotta kitchen over there.

SCISSURA: Oh, there was a kitchen?

MORELLI: You go with a little thing, a little thing on.

SCISSURA: So they gave you a plate?

MORELLI: No plate. Some kind of, the heat is on a big box like this. Iron box, you know what I mean?

SCISSURA: Right, an iron box.

MORELLI: You go over there, everybody on the table sit down, the dish, the dishes were there already. Somebody with the food put it on the dish.

SCISSURA: What type of food did they give you?

MORELLI: Pasta e Fazulle.

SCISSURA: Pasta e Fazulle-macaroni with beans.

MORELLI: Macaroni with cheese.

SCISSURA: Macaroni with cheese.

MORELLI: Lentil, lentil...

SCISSURA: Lentil...

MORELLI: With, with macaroni. They give a lot of things. A little soup.

SCISSURA: A little soup, yeah.

MORELLI: What you call, a little minestrone, you know, they change all week, you know what I mean? And a little piece of meat.

SCISSURA: Right. O.K. Do you remember what day you left from Naples? What year?

MORELLI: No, yeah, what year, it was 1920.

SCISSURA: 1920. Do you remember what month it was.

MORELLI: No, I no remember.

SCISSURA: Was it in the summer or the winter?

MORELLI: No, no, I no remember the month. No.

SCISSURA: O.K. So what did you do on the ship? I mean, what was there to do on the ship?

MORELLI: Well, nothing. We wait for eat and that's all. We wait for travel.

SCISSURA: That's all, you just waited to eat.

MORELLI: I don't know, it take about fifteen days.

SCISSURA: Fifteen days it took.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: And did you make friends on the ship?

MORELLI: No, I have only one friend on the ship.

SCISSURA: Your friend, O.K.

MORELLI: To tell the truth sometimes, a little bit, very rough, you know what I mean. I suffer a little bit.

SCISSURA: You did.

MORELLI: He go for a few sandwich and I get dry stuff to eat.

SCISSURA: You had to eat dry stuff?

MORELLI: But I never threw up.

SCISSURA: So you, but you felt your stomach, you stomach felt sick?

MORELLI: Yeah, I no throw up.

SCISSURA: You didn't throw up.

MORELLI: No.

SCISSURA: So, were the seas rough?

MORELLI: I feel a little bit, a little bit, when, when very rough, I feel a little bit, you know what I mean, a little bit...they bring dry sandwich, dry sandwich, that's all. Sometimes, instead of get soup, he get dry, he get the cook, he give dry sandwich.

SCISSURA: Right, instead of the soup because of your stomach.

MORELLI: You have a nice piece of bread, you know what I mean, a little piece of bread,

you put something on the middle there.

SCISSURA: Right, right. So how did you feel on the boat? Were you nervous? Were you happy? When you were on the boat were you scared?

MORELLI: I was no, I no was scared.

SCISSURA: Or were you nervous that you were coming to America?

MORELLI: No, I no, we were happy.

SCISSURA: You were happy, sure.

MORELLI: Especially when we see the Liberty Statue. Everybody was outside the boat.

SCISSURA: Let's talk about that. When you got to New York, did you go upstairs, you went out to the deck when you, when the boat arrived in New York.

MORELLI: Oh, everybody.

SCISSURA: You went upstairs.

MORELLI: Most of the people was on the top deck when we pass the Statue of Liberty.

SCISSURA: And how did you feel when you saw the Statue of Liberty?

MORELLI: Oh, I feel nice, happy.

SCISSURA: You felt happy.

MORELLI: But I no feel good when the fellow, you know what I mean, he do...

SCISSURA: He put a piece of, a chalk mark...

MORELLI: Chalk mark, you know what I mean. Because I, when I was inside over here. When I was inside over here, I don't know how many day, I remember how many day, but I remember on Sunday a lot of people come in this place. And one lady was Naples. Was in Italy, talk a little bit Italian. I said, "Please do me a favor. Look on the office over there. Look at my case." "Oh, you case, you gonna see, you case "N", negativo." Was all right. "You can go pretty soon."

SCISSURA: So after you saw the Statue of Liberty, what did you do then? They pulled into New York.

MORELLI: No. When we see, I think, I think, the same day, on the night. On the night we was on a ferryboat.

SCISSURA: Right. There was a ferry from New York.

MORELLI: Ferry. We, at that time I think we in Brooklyn.

SCISSURA: Oh, you stopped in Brooklyn. O.K.

MORELLI: Pier Thirty-one, I remember.

SCISSURA: Pier Thirty-one in Brooklyn.

MORELLI: I remember, when you say Pier Thirty, I learn the number the other side. All number I know from the...

SCISSURA: O.K. From Pier Thirty-one they took you in a ferryboat?

MORELLI: They put on a ferryboat.

SCISSURA: And they took you to Ellis Island.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: And did you have any feelings about, I mean you saw New York and there was all those big buildings and everything.

MORELLI: And when I see buildings, when I, when I go, you want to know when I go out?

SCISSURA: No, no. I want to know, when you were on the ferry, did you see all the buildings?

MORELLI: Oh, we see, we see all the buildings.

SCISSURA: And what did, 'cause in Italy I know in 1920 they didn't have big buildings like that.

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. No have.

SCISSURA: So you were happy to be there then.

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. You tell me.

SCISSURA: Very happy.

MORELLI: I was happy.

SCISSURA: O.K. So the ferryboat took you to Ellis Island.

MORELLI: He bring over here.

SCISSURA: Over here. And what happened when you got here? What was the first thing you did?

MORELLI: When I come over here, you know what I mean, we eat nice and the same time, as soon as I eat over here, they give me a big cup of coffee.

SCISSURA: They gave you a big cup of coffee.

MORELLI: On the, on the paper, on the, the first time I see this on paper. Later he tell me the case was pretty good. Next couple of days I go out.

SCISSURA: So you were here for a few days?

MORELLI: I don't know how many days I was. I remember, I don't, I can't, I can't remember this.

SCISSURA: But did you sleep here?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. I sleep; because I remember on the Sunday I sleep, have a little, two, three days I think I was over here.

SCISSURA: Right. Two or three days.

MORELLI: And when I go out, I go out all alone.

SCISSURA: Where was your friend? Was he with you?

MORELLI: Oh, the friend go away. He no was with me.

SCISSURA: Oh, your friend didn't come to Ellis Island.

MORELLI: No, the friend, he pass, he pass, he go away, out!

SCISSURA: Oh, he already went out, right away.

MORELLI: Me, hold me up.

SCISSURA: How come they held you up? How come they held you up?

MORELLI: That's why.

SCISSURA: Right, but why? Was there...

MORELLI: For the eye.

SCISSURA: Oh, something was wrong with your eye.

MORELLI: Was very red. I wash all time on the water.

SCISSURA: Oh, O.K. Your eyes were red.

MORELLI: Was red, you know what I mean, something was wrong. You know that when the lady come on Sunday, I tell, "Please look at my case." And she see my case. That's all. He said, "Nice. You be out pretty soon," he told me, the lady, you know what I mean?

SCISSURA: So when you were here, where did you sleep? Do you remember?

MORELLI: Oh, some kind of like a bed, small bed.

SCISSURA: Like a bed.

MORELLI: Small bed.

SCISSURA: Was it in a private room or were there a lot of people?

MORELLI: No, lot of people.

SCISSURA: There was a lot of people.

MORELLI: Lot of people, yeah.

SCISSURA: And how was the food on Ellis Island?

MORELLI: Oh, beautiful, nice.

SCISSURA: Do you remember what they used to feed you?

MORELLI: Especially when I remember the other side.

SCISSURA: That's right. Sure. You remember there was no food in Italy and over here there was food.

MORELLI: Beautiful.

SCISSURA: And what did they used to feed you here? What type of food did they give you on Ellis Island?

MORELLI: I no remember.

SCISSURA: You don't remember.

MORELLI: I no remember. I know some kind of minestrone.

SCISSURA: Like a minestrone.

MORELLI: Some time I remember minestrone. The second, I no remember another, most of the food. I don't even remember.

SCISSURA: Right. And did you meet any people on Ellis Island? I mean, were there lots of Italians here?

MORELLI: Was only a few, no few Italians, some, some places, you know. Somebody, for long time over there already. Somebody was one month already.

SCISSURA: Oh, there was somebody who was there a month.

MORELLI: We talk, you know what I mean? Somebody, he's a, two weeks, three weeks, three weeks, you know what I mean. My case, I don't know, I no stay long.

SCISSURA: Not long, few days.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: O.K. So did you become friends with anybody here?

MORELLI: No.

SCISSURA: Not on the island.

MORELLI: No, not on island. No, no, no I no be friends with anybody over here.

SCISSURA: Not with anybody. So what did you do all day on Ellis Island?

MORELLI: Over here?

SCISSURA: Yeah.

MORELLI: What I do? Walk around, you know what I mean?

SCISSURA: You walked around.

MORELLI: Friend, one this was, one fellow, he wanted to jump overboard. He wanna go on, he want to swim.

SCISSURA: One guy wanted to jump off the island and swim.

MORELLI: "No, but you freeze," I told him in Italiano, you know. He was not Italiano. I don't know his name. Says, "Over here, what you go, what you find over here?" "You find police," I said.

SCISSURA: Yeah, so you told him not to do it. Things what gonna, I remember all time my teacher.

SCISSURA: Right, the teacher.

MORELLI: You look what can happen after.

SCISSURA: Right. So your friend had left already. They cleared him right away.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: Your friend left right away. So what happened? They finally called you and they

said you could go.

MORELLI: I go out, you know what I mean? When I go out, somebody, Have my address. 712 Ninth Avenue, you know what I mean? And somebody says, "You gotta take the elevator over here, you know, all the way near the ferry.

SCISSURA: So they took you on a ferry. They took you from...

MORELLI: I go out alone, you know.

SCISSURA: By yourself.

MORELLI: All alone I go out.

SCISSURA: And you took a ferry from Ellis Island to New York?

MORELLI: Yeah, to New York. When I reach New York I take my address.

SCISSURA: You had an address.

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. Oh, sure.

SCISSURA: Did you know somebody here?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah.

SCISSURA: Who was here that you knew?

MORELLI: My cousin.

SCISSURA: Oh, you had a cousin.

MORELLI: I have a cousin.

SCISSURA: What was his name?

MORELLI: He give me the address. I say, he says, on the boat, you gotta take some train go up, you know, the elevator. The train go up, upstairs. I reach over there all alone, I swear to God. I have no help. I go upstairs. I try to go in without pay.

SCISSURA: Right. You didn't pay. You tried to go in.

MORELLI: He stop me, you know, you gotta pass a little gate over there.

SCISSURA: Right, the token.

MORELLI: Italian fellow look what happen. Nickel, you know. I have no nickel, I have no money. He pay the nickel.

SCISSURA: Oh, he put the nickel for you.

MORELLI: I go inside, inside the elevator.

SCISSURA: This was the elevated train, now.

MORELLI: The elevated train. And when I reach, now I says, I gotta, what place I gotta, the train stop, you know what I mean? Says what place I gotta get off now. And I walked all over the train. Back and forth. I see, I see the lady talk Italian. "Lady, please, what place I gotta get off for this address?" They figure out, both. "Get off Fiftieth Street. Ninth Avenue."

SCISSURA: Ninth Avenue. So had you ever been on a train before?

MORELLI: No.

SCISSURA: You were never on, this was the first time.

MORELLI: I was train in Italy.

SCISSURA: In Italy.

MORELLI: No on the top.

SCISSURA: Not on the top.

MORELLI: You know what I mean?

SCISSURA: So how did you feel? Was it something new?

MORELLI: Now I look like I was drunk.

SCISSURA: Now you look like you were drunk.

MORELLI: Find somebody, back and forth, you know what I mean? All right, I find. I get out Fifty Street. I get off. When I get off the train, I remember go up. I see the number, start, I say myself I gotta go down. I go down.

SCISSURA: So you started going down.

MORELLI: One block, block and a half. I see the number.

SCISSURA: Now did your cousin know you were coming?

MORELLI: My cousin know I was coming but he never expect the particular day because...

SCISSURA: He didn't know what day you were coming.

MORELLI: He didn't know what day you go out.

SCISSURA: You had written to him and told him you were coming to America?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah, yeah. He write me piece of letter, you know what I mean? You gotta go, come somebody. When you come, you gotta come to somebody, you know what I mean?

SCISSURA: Right, right. So he was the only person you knew here.

MORELLI: When I reach over here. I find the number. Was a little gate outside. I stand near the gate like this and I say somebody gotta come. By a three quarter of an hour, half an hour, little girl come down. "You the cousin Giuseppe Mazzelli?" "Yeah, I'm the cousin, yeah." The girl bring me upstairs.

SCISSURA: The girl brought you upstairs.

MORELLI: My cousin still work in the factory, you know, he work. Give me a little sandwich.

SCISSURA: The girl gave you a sandwich.

MORELLI: No, the family give me the sandwich, no the girl. The girl was about four, about five years old. I go upstairs, give me sandwich. We eat tonight, all right wait my, my cousin in the night.

SCISSURA: So who was there, his wife, your cousin's wife or...?

MORELLI: No, this was, my cousin, my cousin was a boarder over there.

SCISSURA: Oh, he was a boarder.

MORELLI: Border over there, you know what I mean? And the same time, for the night I eat, I go over there.

SCISSURA: Was it an Italian family that had, that was the, that owned the building.

MORELLI: Yeah, all Italian family.

SCISSURA: Italian family, yeah. So what happened when your cousin came home?

MORELLI: Eh, figure out, you know, we kiss each other. Next day he says I gotta work. Next day he bring me to Brooklyn. The place we supposed to find, we no find man. The man was out, I don't know, someplace. I says I can make next day. I go myself all alone in Brooklyn. When I reach Borough Hall, you know, subway, the first exit, New York, Borough Hall, I go in toilet. Instead of man in toilet I go, I see woman. "Woman" outside. I go inside the "Woman", one woman start to holler at me. I bring her out. Read it. Outside say "Woman." Italiano, "woman" means "Man" Woman, no. Two girl was over there and they tell me I gotta go over there, the place I gotta go, "Men." All right. And the first one.

SCISSURA: Right. So then you went, you went to meet the man who was going to give you a job.

MORELLI: Yeah, but I no find a man. I no find, I find, but one long shore, you know was.

SCISSURA: A long shore man.

MORELLI: Yeah. Somebody told me this man was a little bit, you know, "mazzatte."

SCISSURA: He used to...

MORELLI: Make a, make a...

SCISSURA: He used to beat them up.

MORELLI: He used to treat the people bad. Friend of mine, cousin of mine says, "Louie, come here." He bring me on the railroad and I work forty-two year. I got a thing on the car. I left it. I work forty- two years on the railroad.

SCISSURA: Oh, you worked on the railroad.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: Where? Where, in Brooklyn?

MORELLI: New York.

SCISSURA: In New York.

MORELLI: New York Central.

SCISSURA: New York, O.K.

MORELLI: And, uh...

SCISSURA: Do you remember how much they paid you when you started working?

MORELLI: Eighteen cents an hour.

SCISSURA: Eighteen cents an hour.

MORELLI: Yeah, when I started.

SCISSURA: When you started. And you started working right away as soon as you came here, you started working?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah, I started working right away, yeah.

SCISSURA: And did you live with your cousin?

MORELLI: I live, no. I live with my cousin for a while, but what happen, after a couple of weeks I see lot of cockroaches in the house.

SCISSURA: There were cockroaches in the house, yeah.

MORELLI: Friend of mine says, "Louie, the place where we work, you know what I mean, we have a lot of loose zolph, zolph, you know zolph, zolph, zolph. You know the zolpho, come from Sicilia. Take one pound zolpho, bring 'em home tonight. Put a piece of iron on the bottom. Another two on top. After you eat, start the zolpho and go downstairs. And after the zolpho finish, you come back.

SCISSURA: O.K. So that was...

MORELLI: But the zolpho was not little bit, it was more than a pound.

SCISSURA: Oh, my God.

MORELLI: And the zolpho, I put a thing on the top, you know. The zolpho started out and the zolpho, underneath the door, a lot of smoke come out and go all over the building.

SCISSURA: So you were using that to kill the cockroaches and it, you put too much of it...

MORELLI: I kill the cockroaches.

SCISSURA: You killed the cockroaches.

MORELLI: But all the people in the building was downstairs.

SCISSURA: Oh, my God. It started a fire.

MORELLI: I was, I was across the street and, but, what they do all these people outside. Same time police and firemen come in. One officer, bum, break the door who live over here. I live. Italian fellow, oh, I told him, Italian fellow. Friend of mine, you know, police won't lock me up.

SCISSURA: Oh, my God. Because you started a fire.

MORELLI: No, I no start a fire, too much...

SCISSURA: The smoke.

MORELLI: Can't start, you know.

SCISSURA: People couldn't breathe.

MORELLI: Yeah, can't breathe, you know.

SCISSURA: Right, right. Oh, that's funny. So where did you, were there a lot of Italian people over there where your cousin lived?

MORELLI: What place, the place where I live?

SCISSURA: Where your cousin lived?

MORELLI: Yeah. We mostly little bunch, you know, Italian everybody.

SCISSURA: And then where did you go to live after?

MORELLI: Oh, after I live on 69th Street, west side, West End Avenue.

SCISSURA: West End Avenue and 69th Street.

MORELLI: Another thing happen. I wanna, after four, five months...

SCISSURA: You were working on the railroad?

MORELLI: I work on the railroad.

SCISSURA: And you moved to 69th Street.

MORELLI: I work steady that time.

SCISSURA: You were working steady.

MORELLI: And I make a couple hundred dollars, over there a couple hundred. I says I want to send a few dollars, ten, fifteen dollars my family.

SCISSURA: You wanted to send to your...Were you writing to your mother and father and your brothers?

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. I write all the time.

SCISSURA: And they used to write to you?

MORELLI: They write me.

SCISSURA: So you sent them about fifteen dollars.

MORELLI: No, I send by, no, I tell the truth; I send a few dollars, what I have, because my, my father and my mother, when they make the kitchen, they have a little mortgage on. And I send some, I send money. All right, I cook myself, you know. I know how to cook.

SCISSURA: Right, you used to cook.

MORELLI: I take a pot and put on the fire. And this pot with the beans, beans. I wanna make pasta e fazulle with the beans on the table. I mean the beans on the water. With a little fire I says this gotta stay two hour, two hour and a half. I go downstair, Spring Street. Have Naples, have a bank over there, Italian bank.

SCISSURA: Italian bank.

MORELLI: Bank from Naples to send the money. That time I go on the elevator. Sixth Avenue elevator upstairs. On the way back big fire. He pass the hose on the top of the elevator to try and stop. Oh, I say, "Good-bye beans." What happen. The beans still boil, boil, boil. Water finish and start burn the beans.

SCISSURA: Oh, my. The beans started burning.

MORELLI: And the beans, all over, all over the, when you have a couple of flour over there. There was smoke.

SCISSURA: There was smoke.

MORELLI: And good-bye Luigi.

SCISSURA: So you...

MORELLI: The firemen come. I no was over there. They break the door. After the landlord have to pay the door. Boss, "che ti dico?" I no got no money to pay for the door that time. We put twenty-five cents. Have a meter inside the house for the gas.

SCISSURA: Oh, O.K. You had to put twenty-five cents to get gas.

MORELLI: And we have three friends. One he no want to pay. Two, we pay.

SCISSURA: So you were living with two other men, two friends.

MORELLI: Two, three altogether.

SCISSURA: Was it a big apartment?

MORELLI: One he no want to work and he no want to pay. In the same time, a little bit from me, a little bit from the other fellow. He said, "We find short."

SCISSURA: Right, right. Was it a big apartment?

MORELLI: We stop. We stop. We no make no more money inside. I go eat sandwich.

SCISSURA: Out, yeah. Was it a big apartment or a small one?

MORELLI: Oh, small one.

SCISSURA: Small.

MORELLI: You think it's today.

SCISSURA: Yeah, it was very small.

MORELLI: No toilet.

SCISSURA: No toilet.

MORELLI: Toilet you gotta go outside.

SCISSURA: You had to go outside. And you had to share with other people.

MORELLI: Please. Sometime somebody clean, somebody no want to clean. Somebody, somebody, somebody put toilet, somebody put news, you know, this telephone book, put telephone book.

SCISSURA: So you were still working on the railroad and how much money were you making?

MORELLI: Oh, little later I, you know what I mean; I take a little bit, little job. I watch one fellow. The first time, the first time three years I worked like a bastard.

SCISSURA: Yeah. How many hours did you used to work?

MORELLI: No overtime that time.

SCISSURA: No overtime.

MORELLI: Little later. Eighteen, after twenty, we reach twenty, twenty-five, you know what I

mean? Every little, every couple of months he give a couple of pennies.

SCISSURA: Right. And what did you do there?

MORELLI: First time I put track. I watch one fellow, he put seal on the, you know seal, seal. When the cargo, the railroad he put seal on.

SCISSURA: Right. He's the sealer.

MORELLI: Seal. I says I watch this fellow. What happen one time, after a few years, I watch this fellow all the time. I do the work and the same time when I pass by. One time this fellow was sick. And the boss, he looks for somebody. I tell friend of mine, "Tell the boss I can do the job." Was nobody in the morning. I do the job. I do the job. The next day control me. "Who learn you?" "Hey, boss, when I sleep, I sleep with eyes open." How you learn. And I tell the story to the boss. I say all time I pass by, you know, I see he write the car number first, the seal next, you know, I see all of this. You learn, right? He control me. Everything was all right.

SCISSURA: Everything was O.K.

MORELLI: Then this fellow, he was sick. He gave me the job. I stay for twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, about six years on this job.

SCISSURA: Six years. And how much were you making when you started?

MORELLI: He raise me a little bit.

SCISSURA: And were you sending money to Italy?

MORELLI: Oh, send all time.

CISSURA: All the time.

MORELLI: All time I send money over there. My family was all right at that time.

SCISSURA: Right. Where are you living now? 'Cause you left the apartment on 69th Street.
Where did you go live now?

MORELLI: 1927 I go marry in Italy.

SCISSURA: You went to Italy?

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: 1927?

MORELLI: 27?

SCISSURA: O.K. You went on a vacation.

MORELLI: 1926 I citizen papers.

SCISSURA: Oh, you got you citizen papers in 1926. Did you learn how to speak English?

MORELLI: Pretty good.

SCISSURA: A little bit. How did you learn? I mean, you just picked it up?

MORELLI: Yeah, pick up a little, a little at a time. And in 1926 I bought automobile forty-five dollars.

SCISSURA: You bought a car for forty-five dollars.

MORELLI: I drive.

SCISSURA: Do you remember what type of car?

MORELLI: I drive Chevy.

SCISSURA: Chevy.

MORELLI: I drive without a license.

SCISSURA: Uh, huh. What year was this again?

MORELLI: '26. 1926.

SCISSURA: So you used to drive without...

MORELLI: I buy another one; I sell this, buy another one. I got a brand new, 1963. Still I got 'em.

SCISSURA: Right. So you went to Italy in 1927.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: And what did you...

MORELLI: I marry 1927.

SCISSURA: You got married in 1927. You got married in Italy of here?

MORELLI: I marry in Italy.

SCISSURA: You got married in Italy.

MORELLI: Yeah. I bring 'em over here.

SCISSURA: And you brought your wife here.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: What was your wife's name?

MORELLI: Elsie.

SCISSURA: Elsie.

MORELLI: The poison. He bite my wife, the poison die.

SCISSURA: Oh.

MORELLI: The poison die, not my wife. My wife was worse than poison. Oh, forget my wife.

SCISSURA: So you married your wife in Naples or in Ischia?

MORELLI: In Ischia.

SCISSURA: In Ischia.

MORELLI: Yeah!

SCISSURA: And you got married in Italy and then you came back to America.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: And was your family happy to see you? Your mother and father?

MORELLI: Oh, figure out, sure.

SCISSURA: And were you happy to be back in Italy?

MORELLI: No, no, no.

SCISSURA: No, you wanted to come back to America.

MORELLI: I gotta die here, I gotta die over here.

SCISSURA: You wanted to come back.

MORELLI: Yeah, I gotta die over here.

SCISSURA: Yeah. And how come your family never came to America?

MORELLI: Ninety-four, ninety-four years old.

SCISSURA: Ninety-four. God bless.

MORELLI: Thank you.

SCISSURA: How come your family never came over here? I mean your mother, you father, your brothers, your sister?

MORELLI: Too many people. Too much money, too, you know what I mean? They can't

come over here. Over there have a little bit house. Nice, you know what I mean? Nice. My father was sick.

SCISSURA: Right. So they were living over there.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: So when you came back with your wife, did your wife go through Ellis Island again or she came...

MORELLI: All way.

SCISSURA: Because you had your citizen papers.

MORELLI: Yeah, I'm citizen, my paper.

SCISSURA: Right. And where did you live when you came back?

MORELLI: 317 West End Avenue.

SCISSURA: West End Avenue.

MORELLI: West End Avenue. By 68th Street, 68.

SCISSURA: Oh, 68th.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: O.K. And did your wife work also?

MORELLI: Yeah. My wife work. After a little later I got a fight, we divorce.

SCISSURA: Oh, you got divorced.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: O.K. And then did you get married again?

MORELLI: Oh, no. I no get married.

SCISSURA: You never got married.

MORELLI: No, I was divorced about 1963.

SCISSURA: You got divorced in 1963. O.K. You used to work every day, what did you do at night? Did you used to go out?

MORELLI: Well, on the night, show, the theatre a while, you know what I mean, once a week. Especially on a Sunday we go someplace.

SCISSURA: Did you go to church on Sundays in America, too?

MORELLI: Yeah, yeah. That time, yes.

SCISSURA: That time, yeah. Were there a lot of Italian people here at the time?

MORELLI: Yeah, the place where I live that time was a lot of Italian people. You know, every Sunday was church, priest say the Mass every Sunday.

SCISSURA: Right. And then you used to have a big dinner together?

MORELLI: Well, no all time.

SCISSURA: Not all the time.

MORELLI: You know what I mean? Once in a while, you know what I mean, cousin, Easter, Christmas, all time most of this all together.

SCISSURA: So for the holidays you used to get together?

MORELLI: All the day, all the holiday.

SCISSURA: So whatever happened to your friend? The one you came with from Italy?

MORELLI: Oh, he died.

SCISSURA: He died, but did you keep in touch with him?

MORELLI: All time.

SCISSURA: Yeah. Where did he live?

MORELLI: He lived up in the Bronx someplace.

SCISSURA: Oh, he lived in the Bronx. Did you see him often, or...

MORELLI: No, I no see so much that time. The friend was a waiter.

SCISSURA: He was a waiter.

MORELLI: Yeah. He's a now in Italy.

SCISSURA: Now he's in Italy.

MORELLI: Yeah. He retire over there. You ought to see the house over there.

SCISSURA: And he died.

MORELLI: No, he no die.

SCISSURA: He's alive.

MORELLI: He no die yet.

SCISSURA: What about your cousin?

MORELLI: My cousin.

SCISSURA: Did you keep in touch with your cousin?

MORELLI: He die, too.

SCISSURA: He died. So how long did you live on East 68th Street? For a long time or a few years?

MORELLI: Yeah, long. Over there I live a long time. And a little later all these house go down and I move Long Island.

SCISSURA: You moved to Long Island.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: Do you remember what year you moved?

MORELLI: Yeah, 1957.

SCISSURA: You bought a house.

MORELLI: I make the house that time.

SCISSURA: You built a house.

MORELLI: Build the house.

SCISSURA: And you were still working in the railroad in New York?

MORELLI: Oh, all time.

SCISSURA: All the time.

MORELLI: I got forty-two years.

SCISSURA: When you moved to Long Island, did you have kids already? You had children?
When did you have your...

MORELLI: Three children.

SCISSURA: You had three. When, do you know when they were born?

MORELLI: One, my son, I got over there. He born June 13, 1928.

SCISSURA: 1928.

MORELLI: He's on; he's on pension, too. Yeah. Oh, the other one, March third, I don't know the year. I don't remember the other two. I remember only my son.

SCISSURA: So you have two sons and one daughter.

MORELLI: No. One son and two daughters.

SCISSURA: One son and two daughters.

MORELLI: Over here, one California, one Jersey and my son with me.

SCISSURA: Your son lives in Long Island also.

MORELLI: No, he live in Jersey, too.

SCISSURA: In Jersey. So you have a son in Jersey.

MORELLI: eah.

SCISSURA: And a daughter in Jersey.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: So when you moved to Long Island, were there a lot of Italians living in Long Island where you lived?

MORELLI: No, no, only a few.

SCISSURA: Where in Long Island did you live?

MORELLI: Bayville. You know?

SCISSURA: Bayville.

MORELLI: You know Bayville?

SCISSURA: Uh, huh.

MORELLI You know Bayville?

SCISSURA: Uh, huh.

MORELLI: I'm Bayville.

SCISSURA: So you moved to Bayville but you were still working in New York?

MORELLI: For two years. I work in New York all way in west side, you know, west side.

SCISSURA: Right, on the west side, sure.

MORELLI: 59th Street. I work over there, near over there for two years. And I live in Bayville.

SCISSURA: And were you still sending money to Italy?

MORELLI: Oh, no, no more now.

SCISSURA: No more.

MORELLI: No, my mother die, my father die, you know what I mean? No more

SCISSURA: And your brothers? Two brothers you said went to Buenos Aires?

MORELLI: One die, another one sick. He still on pension.

SCISSURA: In Buenos Aires.

MORELLI: Yeah, Buenos Aires.

SCISSURA: And then you had a brother come here you said to America?

MORELLI: I got one in California.

SCISSURA: When did your brother come?

MORELLI: I think '56. 1956.

SCISSURA: 1956.

MORELLI: Yeah, he's paralyzed now.

SCISSURA: He's paralyzed.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: Do you think you made a good decision coming to America?

MORELLI: Who?

SCISSURA: Did you, do you think, are you happy that you came to America?

MORELLI: Oh, sure. Yeah. What do you think?

SCISSURA: Yeah. You would never go back to Italy?

MORELLI: Never. No, no, no, no, no, no. Finish. I gotta die over here.

SCISSURA: You want to die here?

MORELLI: I gotta die over here.

SCISSURA: You have to die here?

MORELLI: Pretty soon.

SCISSURA: No, not pretty soon.

MORELLI: No?

SCISSURA: No, I don't think so.

MORELLI: Ninety-four years old.

SCISSURA: Ninety-four.

MORELLI: Ninety-four.

SCISSURA: So did you go back to Italy a lot? You said you went back when you got married.

MORELLI: Oh, yeah. I come back over there; I come back every four, five years.

SCISSURA: Yeah, O.K. Do you still have brothers alive or sisters alive in Italy? Do you still have any brothers or sisters still in Italy?

MORELLI: In Italy I got one brother. Oh, no. I have two brother. One die.

SCISSURA: Two brothers?

MORELLI: Yeah, I have. One die and another still alive. This brother, you know what I mean; we no go in, the last one, the last one.

SCISSURA: Right. I want to ask you a question.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: When you came, when you came to America and you were living here, was it difficult being an immigrant?

MORELLI: Different, different altogether.

SCISSURA: Was it difficult? I mean, did you, was it hard not knowing how to speak English?

MORELLI: No. I tell you the truth, the place where I work you got a lot of Italian people, you know what I mean? Little at a time I pick it up.

SCISSURA: You picked up?

MORELLI: You know what I mean? I learn, I try, I learn. I work very hard the first few years. Just say what's the matter, you know. I have a little bit head, I say I gotta learn. I take the job all right. After I do the cooper. You know "cooper?" You know "cooper?" What is a cooper?

SCISSURA: The cooper.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: No.

MORELLI: You know the job?

SCISSURA: No.

MORELLI: Oh.

SCISSURA: Is that like a foreman?

MORELLI: No. Cooper, you gotta do everything, you got all the ball, you know all the ball, you gotta fix it, anything. Any machine go on the railroad, you know, you gotta put on the inside the car. Boxcar.

SCISSURA: So you had to know how to do everything.

MORELLI: Oh, yeah, that's why. One time, one time I, one time one big machine come from Germany. This machine, the name of the machine was "Human Eye." And I don't know how many thousand dollars it cost. This machine had to go from New York on the ship. It come on the dock where I work and it got to go in California. And the boss tell me, "Louie, this machine cost so much money. Take and brace it all right." You know "brace?" When machine reach over there, box cigar, twenty- four big cigar for present.

SCISSURA: Oh, God.

MORELLI: Because the machine reach nice in California. "Human Eye." I don't know how many thousand dollars it cost, this machine. I don't know what kind of machine they call it, "Human Eye."

SCISSURA: "Human Eye." And the guy gave you a box of cigars as a present.

MORELLI: You know, my boss give me.

SCISSURA: You boss.

MORELLI: The thing reach all right. Another time a car of marble come from Italy. All sheets of marble, big, like this. They go over there. I fix nice and I got another box of

SCISSURA: Oh, good, good.

MORELLI: You know what I mean? We do good job.

SCISSURA: So you liked where you worked?

MORELLI: Oh, I like. But after a lot of people, they want me to go on pension because they know I'm...

SCISSURA: You're a good worker.

MORELLI: I know how to do the business. And the people over there, the boss, "What's the matter? Why don't you stay a little bit more?" And sometime, last few years somebody try and bother me on the railroad. I think the teacher that time and says; "Now I can't fight." I put a piece of iron, piece of pipe someplace. Sometime I got the gas pipe and gotta give in the head. But after I think why I gotta do this. Better go in pension. I was already to go in pension. And I think the teacher in Italy when he tell me this. I says maybe I, I break the, I break the head. I sweep up. He fight. I can't fight.

SCISSURA: Yeah. You take something.

MORELLI: I can use the pipe.

SCISSURA: Yeah, and you would have hit his head.

MORELLI: I say, "Boss, tomorrow I want a pension."

SCISSURA: How old were you when...

MORELLI: Oh, next week.

SCISSURA: Were you sixty-five when you retired or sixty-two?

MORELLI: No. Sixty-five.

SCISSURA: Sixty-five.

MORELLI: I pass sixty-five, oh, yeah. I was already to go in pension.

SCISSURA: Oh, you were already.

MORELLI: Yeah. Anytime I wanna go in, I sign everything, any time. Boss say, but the boss say, "Stay a little bit more," you know, he no wanna lose me.

SCISSURA: Yeah. He didn't want you to leave.

MORELLI: I know. He no want to lose me because I know all the tricks, you know.

SCISSURA: Sure.

MORELLI: I know all the number of track. I know the trains, you know what I mean? I know he office. When I left, I know the business, oh everything.

SCISSURA: You knew everything about the railroads.

MORELLI: Yeah, sometimes I do, sometimes dangerous work between the railroad car. I put, I put red flag, you know. Nobody supposed to touch the red flag, supposed to take them off who put them on. But one time one conductor he takes the flags off. I report. He have one week off. He no supposed to touch.

SCISSURA: Yeah, so they...

MORELLI: Pretty near kill me that time.

SCISSURA: Oh, my God.

MORELLI: What you call, the engine come in. I was between the car working, you know what I mean? Lucky I was on the empty space. If I was some other place, he kill me. I report him and one week.

SCISSURA: And he had one week suspension.

MORELLI: Yeah, lot of things.

SCISSURA: You said you became an American citizen, right?

MORELLI: Yeah, 1926.

SCISSURA: 1926. How did you feel becoming an American citizen?

MORELLI: Nice.

SCISSURA: Yeah, it felt good?

MORELLI: I like come; I go to school a little bit.

SCISSURA: Uh, huh. Oh, you went to school a little bit.

MORELLI: Yeah, I learn 125, 125 questions.

SCISSURA: Uh, huh. That's for the test to become a citizen.

MORELLI: Test that time. Guess the judge what ask me, last question ask me?

SCISSURA: Which one? I don't know, what was it?

MORELLI: When you be citizen, what place you want to belong? What party you want to belong? I no study this.

SCISSURA: He asked you when you become a citizen, where do you want...

MORELLI: When I, when you be citizen, what party you want to belong?

SCISSURA: Oh, what party. O.K.

MORELLI: Yeah. I think a little bit. If I no answer it was all right. I answer, stupid I answer.
"I want to be on the democratic." "Go home! Learn a little more."

SCISSURA: (laughing) "Cause he was a Republican, probably.

MORELLI: Oh, and the place where, the place where I work was a sergeant, you know what I mean? He hold the piece of paper. I call. All question. He says, "I born in this country. I don't know half of what you know." He, he, he...

SCISSURA: The questions, sure.

MORELLI: One sergeant, you know, police sergeant. He was nice fellow.

SCISSURA: So you had to go back and take the test again.

MORELLI: I got to come back again. I says...

SCISSURA: Did he ask you the question again?

MORELLI: No, no. Different judge, different people altogether.

SCISSURA: Right, right.

MORELLI: You know, I think of them right away that time.

SCISSURA: Right.

MORELLI: 1926.

SCISSURA: Well, good. It was very nice hearing the story. It was very interesting. I want to thank you for coming.

MORELLI: Oh, yeah.

SCISSURA: Thank you for telling us everything that happened to you.

MORELLI: Yeah.

SCISSURA: And I hope you live another ninety-four years. This is Carlo Scissura signing off for the National Park Service.