

EI-268

LILLIAN DORAN CAVANAUGH

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INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 3/1994

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 4/1994

IRELAND, 1912

AGE 15

PORT OF EMBARCATION: QUEENSTOWN

RESIDENCES: BALLYMORE
NEW HAVEN, CT

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Sunday, March 28, 1993. I am in Weathersfield, Connecticut with Lillian Cavanaugh, who came from Ireland in 1912 when she was fifteen years old.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, Lord. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Good afternoon, Mrs. Cavanaugh.

CAVANAUGH: Good afternoon.

SIGRIST: Also in the room is Mrs. Cavanaugh's daughter, Betty Resney, and we may hear a hearing aid occasionally on the recording.

CAVANAUGH: I have two, one in each year.

SIGRIST: Yes. Mrs. Cavanaugh, let me ask you first what your maiden name was. What was your name before you were married?

CAVANAUGH: Doran.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

CAVANAUGH: D-O-R-A-N.

SIGRIST: And do you know what your birth date is?

CAVANAUGH: Yes. October, the fifth of October, 1896.

SIGRIST: 1896. Where were you born, Mrs. Cavanaugh.

CAVANAUGH: I was born in Ireland.

SIGRIST: In what town in Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Ballymore. Ballymore.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

CAVANAUGH: B-A-L-L-Y M-O-R-E.

SIGRIST: Where in Ireland is that? What part of Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Westmeath, the center of Ireland. It's right in the

center of Ireland.

SIGRIST: Can you describe what Ballymore looked like when you were a little girl?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, a small town. I think it was a big town then.

SIGRIST: What kind of industry, what did people do who lived there?

CAVANAUGH: There was two big stores in High Street, and then there was a Low Street that had quite a few stores, little ones and big ones, kind of a little village.

SIGRIST: Did your family live inside of the town or outside of the town?

CAVANAUGH: Outside.

SIGRIST: And can you describe the house that you lived in?
Can you describe the house that you lived in?

CAVANAUGH: It was a small house, no upstairs. And there was two big bedrooms and a kitchen and a parlor.

SIGRIST: What was the house made out of?

CAVANAUGH: Well, there were some bricks and mortar as it was.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: And how did you keep the house warm?

CAVANAUGH: Fireplaces.

SIGRIST: How many?

CAVANAUGH: Uh, three. One in each room, and one in the kitchen, of course.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the kitchen for me, and what it looked like?

CAVANAUGH: There was two big windows on it. There was four windows on the small cottage. Three in the back and three in the front. And they'd walk up to the house from the high road, the highway.

SIGRIST: What was in the kitchen?

CAVANAUGH: There was a large table in front of the window and we had another big table on the side of the house. (she laughs) And a fireplace, and that's all, and a sink, you know, with the . . .

SIGRIST: Did you have water inside the house?

CAVANAUGH: No.

SIGRIST: Where did you get your water?

CAVANAUGH: There was a pump outside the door, (she laughs) a little ways from the door.

SIGRIST: I see. So you had to bring water in the house then?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. We could bring it in from the pump. Just a big pump there, pump all you want. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you have a farm?

CAVANAUGH: No, we didn't have a farm. We had a little piece of, I don't know. It wouldn't be a farm though. And we had two cows and a doghouse. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So you had a dog.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, we had, my father, he was a gamekeeper for the people around there. He used to shoot different things that wouldn't be wanted, I'd say. So, and then he used to take care of the family with a big, a large family lived next door to us, and he worked for them. They had money, so my father was a gamekeeper for them.

SIGRIST: What was your dad's name?

CAVANAUGH: John Doran.

SIGRIST: And what was his personality like?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, he was a very happy man with his family,
(she laughs) and my mother.

SIGRIST: What did your father look like?

CAVANAUGH: He was a good-looking man, medium height. I think
he had kind of dark brown hair.

SIGRIST: What were some of your father's hobbies?

CAVANAUGH: He was a gamekeeper and he used to shoot through the
country, part of the country anyway. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So did he supply meat for your family to eat?

CAVANAUGH: No. Once in a while he might shoot a pheasant or,
then he worked for the family, a big family with a
lot of money. They were big farmers.

SIGRIST: This was the people next door to you.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

CAVANAUGH: My mother's name, Elizabeth Bryan.

SIGRIST: Can you spell her last name?

CAVANAUGH: B-Y-A-R-N. I think that's the way it's spelled.

SIGRIST: B-Y-A-R.

CAVANAUGH: No. B . . . B-R . . . I can't spell it and I
can't remember it. B-Y-A-R-N.

SIGRIST: B-R-Y-A-N. Bryan. Was she from this little town?
Was she from Ballymore?

CAVANAUGH: No. She was from a town outside of Ballymore.

SIGRIST: Do you know how your parents met?

CAVANAUGH: No. They don't talk that way over there.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you have brothers and sisters?

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you name them for me?

CAVANAUGH: By name?

SIGRIST: Yes, by name.

CAVANAUGH: Well, there was Peg, her name was Margaret, and me,
and Mary and Bridgy and, ooh! How many is that?
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: That's four.

CAVANAUGH: I can't name any more. I forget them.

SIGRIST: Because there were some more.

CAVANAUGH: Yes. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So this is a big family in this house. You had a
lot of people living in your house.

CAVANAUGH: No, just the father and mother and the family.

SIGRIST: Right, right. Can you tell me a little bit about
some of the chores that you had to do when you were
a little girl?

CAVANAUGH: I had to wash the dishes and sweep the floor and
maybe sometimes go out and help pick potatoes.

SIGRIST: Did you have your own little plot of potatoes?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What other kinds of vegetables did you grow?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, they had turnips, cabbage, potatoes, onions.
That's about all.

SIGRIST: Did you eat everything that you grew, or did you
sell some of it?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, no. We never sold any. We eat it.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: What kind, tell me some of the foods your mother
made?

CAVANAUGH: She used to make good bread.

SIGRIST: How did she do that?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, she mix some bread in a pan, put it in there,
pat it all around and bake it, bake it over the
hangers, you know, the kitchen. And there was a
hanger down with a hook in it, and that's where she
put it, there.

SIGRIST: What other kinds of food did she feed the family
with?

CAVANAUGH: Potatoes.

SIGRIST: How did she prepare the potatoes?

CAVANAUGH: Boiled them. And cabbage, boil it. And turnips.
(she laughs) Is that coming out? (referring to
the tape)

SIGRIST: Yes, yes it's coming out. (referring to the tape)
Did you put any food away for the winter?

CAVANAUGH: No.

SIGRIST: You didn't store any kind of food for winter?

CAVANAUGH: No. Just the potatoes, outside stuff. We never did
any canning.

SIGRIST: What would your mother make for a special occasion.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, she'd get maybe chicken, turkey, maybe. If she
had a big crowd, it had to be a turkey.

SIGRIST: Where would she get the turkey?

CAVANAUGH: We raised them.

SIGRIST: Oh, so you had your own . . .

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yeah. We raised chickens and everything. We
only had a small place, though.

SIGRIST: Did you have to, or did you help out with the

slaughtering of the animals?

CAVANAUGH: Never. I'd go away from it.

SIGRIST: Not very pleasant.

CAVANAUGH: No. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: What did you do for fun as a little girl in Ireland?
What games did you play?

CAVANAUGH: We used to play tag and jump over each others' backs
like that. (she laughs) Oh, I don't know, kind
of rough stuff.

SIGRIST: What were you like as a little girl?

CAVANAUGH: Huh?

SIGRIST: What were you like as a little girl?

CAVANAUGH: What would I like?

SIGRIST: Describe yourself as a little girl. What were you
like as a little girl?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I don't know what I liked really.
(she laughs) I'd take whatever I get.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you have grandparents in town?

CAVANAUGH: No, no. But my father's people were in the town,
but my mother's people was in a different county.

SIGRIST: So you had to travel to see them.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. Not very much. There was too many of us.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your father's parents, if
they lived in that town?

CAVANAUGH: They didn't, I never saw them. I saw my mother's
mother, my grandmother, that's all.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your grandmother?

CAVANAUGH: Not much, because I was very young, I guess. I used
to call her "Granny." (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you go to school in Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you describe what the school looked like for me?

CAVANAUGH: It was in the town of Ballymore, and there was two
teachers, and a big room, and a smaller room. And

outside toilets and everything on the outside.

SIGRIST: What did they teach you in school? What kinds of subjects did you have?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, reading and writing, arithmetic. That's about all.

SIGRIST: Were you taught Gaelic?

CAVANAUGH: No. I never, I couldn't speak a word of it. But now they have classes in the Gaelic language.

SIGRIST: Did your parents, could they speak Gaelic?

CAVANAUGH: No, they couldn't. Just English. But my husband, his folks come from the south of Ireland and they used to teach Gaelic.

SIGRIST: So could your husband speak Gaelic?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, he could.

SIGRIST: Oh, that's interesting.

CAVANAUGH: He died, though, yeah.

SIGRIST: Yes, that's what your daughter said.

CAVANAUGH: Last December.

SIGRIST: I'm sorry.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, it was tough.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me church life? Was there a church in Ballymore.

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

SIGRIST: And what religion were you?

CAVANAUGH: Pardon?

SIGRIST: What religion were you? Were you Catholic?

CAVANAUGH: Catholic, Catholic, yeah.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the church? Do you remember?

CAVANAUGH: I can't remember the name. Give it any rose, or whatever you want it. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Were you a religious family?

CAVANAUGH: Huh?

SIGRIST: Were you a religious family?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, we had to go to church.

SIGRIST: Who was more religious, your mother or your father?

CAVANAUGH: My father was.

SIGRIST: What kinds of things, how did you practice your religion in the house?

CAVANAUGH: Well, you had to be good. Caught swearing or anything and we'd get a good whipping for it or a good clout, as they say. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you say prayers at all at home?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes. We used to say the rosary in Lent time, and special times.

SIGRIST: Do you, did you go to church every Sunday?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, we had to go three miles.

SIGRIST: How did you get there?

CAVANAUGH: Walked. (she laughs) The church and the school was in Ballymore. It was a nice little town.

SIGRIST: It was pretty?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. Well, it kept up, you know.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me about some of the things your mother

had to do around the house?

CAVANAUGH: Well, she did all the cooking, and she went to the store for everything. And then, regular household for a mother, the washing and ironing.

SIGRIST: You said that she went to the store that was in Ballymore.

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

SIGRIST: What kind of things would you buy at the store?

CAVANAUGH: Well, you could buy mostly everything. There was two big stores, and the post office, the police station. It was a regular town. (?) was another big, big town, one of the chief towns. Oh, we weren't out in the country altogether.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Can you describe how you celebrated Christmas?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, Christmas was great. We had everything to eat that we wanted to, and we'd get soda, and oh, that was great. (she laughs) Oh, yes. We had a nice Christmas. I always looked forward to it. But we had to go to mass, no matter how it went.

SIGRIST: The sound that you hear is the door opening in the background. Did you go to mass on Christmas Eve at night?

CAVANAUGH: Midnight mass? No, it was too far away. We couldn't go, you know, at night. They wouldn't let us go. We'd go if they'd let us, my father and mother. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: What kinds of things, you said your father was a gamekeeper.

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

SIGRIST: So he liked animals, yes?

CAVANAUGH: Birds mostly, and pheasants and everything like that.

SIGRIST: How would your father play with you when you were children? What do you remember about your father playing with you when you were a little kid?

CAVANAUGH: Well, sometimes we'd have a game of cards, Snap or something like that. I forget now. Yes, he was always home. He liked to stay home. Of course, he was going to Ballymore when he'd get a drink, but

he'd come home always. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So there was a tavern in Ballymore.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: I see.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. Oh, it was a big town, Ballymore, and then Lostry was further down, way down from there. That was a big store they had that used to sell everything in the land, clothes and, it was a big store.

SIGRIST: Did any of your brothers and sisters have a job outside of the home?

CAVANAUGH: No, not in my time, no. I only had one brother and seven sisters. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: It's a big family.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, wasn't it.

SIGRIST: Did any of your sisters, were they ever brought out to work for other people? Did they get jobs at other farms?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, the boys used to, although I only had one

brother, but he used to work outside. But the girls didn't.

SIGRIST: The girls didn't.

CAVANAUGH: No. They all stayed home.

SIGRIST: So everyone was at home, then.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, oh, yeah. Everybody was home. For a while I come out here when I was fifteen, a long time ago.

SIGRIST: Did, excuse me a second. (break in tape) We're now resuming with Lillian Cavanaugh.
Mrs. Cavanaugh, when you were a little girl, what did you know about America?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, it was a great country, and you get work and the people are good. And someday we would go over there. We were always thinking to come out here, my uncle's. I had a big family out here. We come out, one of my sisters, my older sister, and I came out first. And then several years after they grow up, they come out here.

SIGRIST: I see. So your whole family eventually wanted to come here.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Who was here already? You said you had uncles that were in America?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Were those your mother's brothers or your father's brothers?

CAVANAUGH: My father's brothers.

SIGRIST: And what were they doing in America?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, they were old people to me, they stayed home, worked in the house. If they had a family young enough for working, they'd be in the town somewhere getting a job someplace, or out here.

SIGRIST: Was that common? Did a lot of young people come to America from Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Huh?

SIGRIST: Did a lot of young people leave Ireland to come to America to get work?

CAVANAUGH: A lot, yeah. They did. It was common. And I guess

a lot of them did come to this country.

SIGRIST: Well, why did you want to come? Why did you specifically want to come?

CAVANAUGH: Well, my father had two brothers and their families out here, and they said that they'd be very sad if they let them come on, let my sister Peg and myself come out, because we were, I was fifteen, I guess. So we come out. That's what happened to us.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Is Peg older than you? Is Peg older than you?

CAVANAUGH: She's now, she's, just now she's in a rest home.

SIGRIST: But how much, is she older, her age?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, just a week. (they laugh) A year, just one year exactly. Almost the same birthdays.

SIGRIST: When you were in Ireland did you ever have a job?

CAVANAUGH: No.

SIGRIST: No, just at home.

CAVANAUGH: No, just at home. None of us had jobs, because Peg and I were the oldest. And then there was several

more. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did your parents want you to come to America?

CAVANAUGH: Well, they didn't make (?) come, but we had the chance to get here and get working and learn something.

SIGRIST: Who paid for your passage?

CAVANAUGH: My uncles paid. I went to one, and she went to another. Hartford, and I was in New Haven with my other family. They had kids about my own age. I went to school there for a year, and then I wanted to go to work. I'd like to go and make money.

SIGRIST: Do you remember, when you were in Ireland, do you remember what you packed to take with you?

CAVANAUGH: Well, we took all our clothes. And some money, you know, in our pockets, a little bit, you know, not much.

SIGRIST: Did your parents give you a little dinner or something to see you off?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes, to come to see is all. The neighbors, and school kids would come down to see us. And that's

all.

SIGRIST: Was it sad to say goodbye to everybody?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, terrible! The first time, but then we went back on a visit after over five years. And we spent a good time over there then, you know, we stayed, I forget how long. We stayed there two months, I think, or something like that. Then we come back and got our jobs back. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Where did you leave from? When you left Ireland the first time, where did you leave from? What port did you leave from?

CAVANAUGH: Port? Queenstown.

SIGRIST: You left from Queenstown. How did you get from Ballymore to Queenstown?

CAVANAUGH: We had got a jaunting car and a horse.
(she laughs) We had a good ride. Three miles.

SIGRIST: And who went with you to Queenstown?

CAVANAUGH: My father, and one of his neighbors. My mother wouldn't come.

SIGRIST: Why wouldn't your mother come?

CAVANAUGH: Well, she had other small children. So she didn't come.

SIGRIST: How long did you have to stay in Queenstown?

CAVANAUGH: I guess overnight and that's all. Go and get the boat the next morning.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the boat that you took?

CAVANAUGH: Gosh, I can't, it's not the Titanic. Well, it was around the time the Titanic went down, and then it was the next boat. I can't remember the name of it now.

SIGRIST: On your Oral History Form I have the Lusitania. Was it the Lusitania that you took?

CAVANAUGH: No. I can't remember now.

SIGRIST: Did the Titanic sink before you left Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: How did that make you feel?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I don't think it bothered us a bit.

(she laughs)

SIGRIST: You weren't frightened about getting on a boat after the Titanic?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, I kind of didn't like it.

SIGRIST: I don't blame you.

CAVANAUGH: First we had to get on a tender to go out to the big boat. It looked to me like a million dollars, it was so big. But it was really nice. They were playing music and everything. It was great.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me where you slept on the boat?

CAVANAUGH: The what?

SIGRIST: Where did you sleep on the boat?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, we had rooms, you know, where there'd be a little place. Just like here, the same thing. There was divided in berths, you know. And there was, I think, four on ours. One each side of the board. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So who shared your cabin with you? It's you and Peg.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And then who else is in that room with you?

CAVANAUGH: I forget their names.

SIGRIST: Strangers.

CAVANAUGH: Strangers. Oh, yeah. We didn't know anything about them till we met them on the boat.

SIGRIST: Do you remember saying goodbye to your father when you got on the boat?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. I could see him on the deck, and we were on the tender going off. My mother didn't come, because she had to stay with the family.

SIGRIST: Yes. How long did your boat ride take?

CAVANAUGH: Not too long. I'd say maybe fifteen or twenty minutes or something like that.

SIGRIST: The big boat, how long did the big boat take to get to America?

CAVANAUGH: I didn't get you.

SIGRIST: How long did it take for the boat to go from Ireland

to America?

CAVANAUGH: I think it was two weeks.

SIGRIST: Yes, probably.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What did you do on the boat? What was there to do on the boat?

CAVANAUGH: They had dancing and they had games and eating.
(she laughs) They gave us good food.

SIGRIST: What kinds of food did they give you on the boat?
Do you remember?

CAVANAUGH: I don't remember honestly.

SIGRIST: But you liked it.

CAVANAUGH: But you had cake and everything like that, yeah.

SIGRIST: Was there a dining room on the boat?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, a great big long thing, you know.

SIGRIST: Did you like to dance as a young person?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yeah. I loved to dance. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: How did you learn to dance?

CAVANAUGH: We had a dancing man, he used to come in after school. Twice a week, I think it was, tell us how to dance. We learned all right.

SIGRIST: Is that a popular pastime in Ireland? Do people like to dance?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Were you a musical family at all?

CAVANAUGH: No. We had no music, only a graphophone with the big horn on it.

SIGRIST: So the boat takes about two weeks. And did you get sick?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I was sick all the way. I nearly died.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did Peg get sick?

CAVANAUGH: No. She took care of me.

SIGRIST: How did they, do you remember how they took care of being seasick?

CAVANAUGH: They give you pills, you know, the nurse that was on the board. She'd have everything you'd want. Oh, it was nice.

SIGRIST: It was a nice boat.

CAVANAUGH: It was nicer than it was the last time I went.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Were there lots of Irish people on the boat?

CAVANAUGH: No, not that I remember. I remember there was a lot of kids and their families. And the next time I went over after six years, I think, six or seven years, we went back.

SIGRIST: Did . . .

CAVANAUGH: We went back two weeks or two months.

SIGRIST: It takes a long time.

CAVANAUGH: It does. Oh, not to be on the boat that long, but pretty near it. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you describe that for me?

CAVANAUGH: Well, it looked like a big statue of a man.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you know what it was?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, oh yes. We knew that. We'd be getting off
when we see the Statue of Liberty.

SIGRIST: And then did they take you to Ellis Island?

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me what happened at Ellis Island?

CAVANAUGH: Well, we had to go all through a physical, and I
don't know what. But anyway, we wasn't there long.
My uncle was waiting for us, and my cousin. They
were waiting for us right there and took us right
off the boat, which is nothing to do.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you were wearing when you got
off the boat for the first time?

CAVANAUGH: Well, some kind of a dress. I don't know what color
it was. Maybe green. (she laughs) We weren't on

the boat long, because they were right there to take us off. It was crowded. And I saw all the people that was all around me. (she laughs) Black and white and everything.

SIGRIST: Had you ever seen a black person before?

CAVANAUGH: No, I never saw a black child till I come off the boat in New York, and I saw a bunch of them, you know, on the sidewalk, playing ball and skipping. I thought it was great. And my sister Peg was, of course, with me, and my aunt and my uncle to bring us home. And that was the last time.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about what Peg was like as a person? What was Peg's personality like?

CAVANAUGH: She was very bossy to me! (she laughs) No, she was very good-looking, Peg was. She didn't look a bit like me. We didn't look like sisters. So, she was very good, and she got the same as I got.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Well, if she took care of you when you were sick on the boat, so . . .

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I had a lot of people taking care of me. I

wasn't able to get on my feet. It was terrible. I hated to think of coming back on it. But I was already coming back. I don't know why.

SIGRIST: Well, that's interesting.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So your uncle comes and gets you.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And where did he take you?

CAVANAUGH: He took me back to his brother's house. They had a family there, to New Haven.

SIGRIST: Oh, to New Haven. How did you get to New Haven?

CAVANAUGH: We were on the train.

SIGRIST: Had you been on a train before?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, from New York to where we were going.

SIGRIST: To New Haven, yeah. When you were in New York City, what did you think about New York City?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, we thought it was a, we didn't know what to think of it. (she laughs) Such a big place and

so many buildings and whatnot.

SIGRIST: It looked different than Ballymore.

(Mrs. Cavanaugh laughs) Did you see anything, other than the little black child, that you had never seen before?

CAVANAUGH: No, I never saw one before.

SIGRIST: Was there anything else that you had never seen before that struck you as unusual?

CAVANAUGH: No. People all look the same way. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: When you got to New Haven, where did you stay?

CAVANAUGH: I stayed with my aunt and my uncle.

SIGRIST: And how long did you stay with them?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I stayed there over a year.

SIGRIST: Oh, so you lived right with them.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, I lived with them there. And my other sister, she went and had an aunt here in Hartford and an uncle, and she come up to stay with them.

SIGRIST: So Peg goes to Hartford and you go to New Haven.

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: What did you do for that first year? Did you get a job?

CAVANAUGH: No. I lived in the house with the family. No, I wouldn't get a job. I'd have to be sixteen.

SIGRIST: Oh, you were still too young.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, fifteen then.

SIGRIST: Tell me about that first year in America. Did you like America when you got here?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, we loved it.

SIGRIST: What was different about America?

CAVANAUGH: Now?

SIGRIST: No. What was different from Ireland? How was America different from Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, it was very different because that was a city, New Haven, they lived in, and we lived in a

farmhouse in Ireland. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you ever experience anyone making fun of you because you weren't . . .

CAVANAUGH: Oh, the kids. I went to school there for a while, and every kid in the school would be on the front lawn where I lived, you know, to be with me and everything. No, they were very friendly. I loved it.

SIGRIST: Did you go right into school when you got here?

CAVANAUGH: Yes. But I honestly, from not even a year, because I wanted to come up. My sister was up in Hartford.

SIGRIST: And you wanted to be with Peg?

CAVANAUGH: I wanted to be with her. They were growing up, the family in my uncle's house. But they were all loving me. They did everything for me.

SIGRIST: Oh, well that was nice.

CAVANAUGH: When I think, I wouldn't think that then, you know. But I often think of it.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about the year that you went to

school. What was going to school in America like?

CAVANAUGH: It was a very good school. The teachers were about the same way. There were nuns. Of course, there had to be a nun in the school. We never, we went to public schools over in Ireland, you know, not nuns.

SIGRIST: What grade did they put you in?

CAVANAUGH: I think it was the third.

SIGRIST: And you're older than most third graders.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, I was.

SIGRIST: How did that make you feel?

CAVANAUGH: It didn't bother me a bit. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: You sound like you were pretty happy-go-lucky.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, I was, really.

SIGRIST: What was your favorite subject in school in America?

CAVANAUGH: Not arithmetic. Geography, I think. I liked that.

SIGRIST: When you were living with your aunt and uncle in New Haven, did they have electricity in their house?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you have electricity in Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: No. They had electricity, but we never, where would we get wires and everything in the country, the middle of the country. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me where in your uncle's house you slept? Where was your bedroom in your uncle's house?

CAVANAUGH: There was the kitchen and two bedrooms. One each side of the kitchen. And then we had little cots there for anyone that would want to stay, like, if they came visiting. I think there was only two of them. (she laughs) But anyway, they served the purpose.

SIGRIST: And that's where you slept when you lived there.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Were you expected to do any of the household chores in your uncle's house?

CAVANAUGH: No, no. Before we came out here, we'd go outside

and maybe work, pick potatoes or something like that. (she laughs) Enough for the dinner.

SIGRIST: But not in New Haven. In New Haven you didn't have to do any work.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, no, no. Not here, no.

SIGRIST: Did your uncle have . . .

CAVANAUGH: I did a lot of work for them people in New Haven.

SIGRIST: What kinds of work did you do?

CAVANAUGH: Housework and outside, if you had to do anything there. Of course, they had no farms. They were living in the town, New Haven.

SIGRIST: Is that how you paid your uncle back for the passage money?

CAVANAUGH: No. Just he gave us room and board. We never paid him. We didn't have to pay him. He wouldn't take anything from us.

SIGRIST: What was your uncle doing? What was his profession?

CAVANAUGH: He was a real estate man, Uncle Richard.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Was his wife Irish, also?

CAVANAUGH: Yes. Born here, though.

SIGRIST: I see. So you stayed with your uncle for a year,
and then you go to Hartford to be with your sister.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And that uncle, that's a different uncle.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What job did that uncle have?

CAVANAUGH: Well, he died before we came here. He died a long
time. He was a policeman here, and the wife, of
course, stayed in the house. And my sister Peg, she
lived with her. Then Peg, she got a job in the
Hartford Hospital in the linen room where they used
to put away the clean linen. And I got a job there,
too. And I come up, I come up to work there when I
was old enough to go to work. So we're here ever
after.

SIGRIST: That's an interesting kind of job to get. How did
Peg get that job?

CAVANAUGH: Well, my uncle was a friend of the laundress there.
(the sound of a squeaking door is heard) He worked there one time in the Hartford Hospital in the engine room, and they got to be good friends and all. And she said, "Bring them in and I'll give them a job somewhere here." (she laughs) And Peg got a good job, but I couldn't get until I was fifteen or sixteen, so I got a job then. I worked there for a while until I got used to the place and looked for a job for myself.

SIGRIST: Did you like having a job?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes. We loved the jobs.

SIGRIST: And did you send money back to Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, when we could get enough, like, you know. We used to pay sixteen dollars a week or something like that. And that was good money, because things aren't like what they are now. Did they hear me say all that?

SIGRIST: (he laughs) And I'm sure that your parents were very happy to receive the money?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, they'd have to. That's why we had to come out

here for, to help out. And my uncle brought us out here, me and Peg first. And as time goes by we all came out here but my father and mother.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the first time you went back to Ireland to visit. You said you were here for six years?

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

SIGRIST: And then you went back?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Why did you go back?

CAVANAUGH: Just to visit them and see how they were doing. They were all home but two of us. And about four or five years after that two more come out here.

SIGRIST: Now, did you and Peg help the other people to come over? Did you and Peg help pay for the passage of your brothers and sisters?

CAVANAUGH: Yes. We had whatever we could have, you know.

SIGRIST: Now, where did they live when they came over? Did they live with you?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. I had a, no. I don't think they lived with me. I think they lived with my uncle, the ones we lived with.

SIGRIST: In New Haven?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: I see. Tell me a little bit about what happened to Peg. Did Peg get another job after she worked in the linen room, or what happened to Peg as time went on?

CAVANAUGH: She got married.

SIGRIST: How soon after she came did she get married?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, it's been a long time. I can't remember that. It's too far.

SIGRIST: Did she stay in Hartford?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: She did stay in Hartford.

CAVANAUGH: I come up to Hartford to her, and then after a while I got a job in the linen room with her, in the Hartford Hospital.

SIGRIST: What was the next job you got?

CAVANAUGH: The next job, I did house work. I worked for an old lady, a rich old lady, and she was very good to me. I always got, it was somehow easy getting a job.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did you have to do for the rich woman?

CAVANAUGH: Well, she had another girl. She used to do the cooking and that kind of work, and I'd do the rest of the house, cleaning it.

SIGRIST: Were there lots of Irish people in Hartford?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, there was a lot, I think.

SIGRIST: Did, you said the rich woman had another girl in the house, another servant.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Was she Irish also?

CAVANAUGH: Yes, she was. She was the cook. She used to do the cooking, and the waiting and the cleaning.

SIGRIST: Was that common at that time for young Irish women to get domestic work in houses?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. There was nothing else we could do.
(she laughs) Ahh.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about how you met your husband.
How did you meet your husband?

CAVANAUGH: Well, I worked with a woman that, no that wasn't it.
I met him at a wedding. I remember that was the first time I ever saw him.

SIGRIST: How old were you?

CAVANAUGH: I was about seventeen, like that. I wasn't able to get around the country. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Was he living in Hartford, also?

CAVANAUGH: Yes. He was a bus driver, or a motor man, we used to call him. They had, they got something new. They call them jitneys or cars. They used to take the people to work, like a bus. And when they got the buses, he got a job on the buses, and he worked on that. He got a good job.

SIGRIST: So do you remember what year you married your

husband?

CAVANAUGH: I'm confused now. Could it have been 1925?

SIGRIST: It could be. I don't know. (they laugh) What was your husband's name?

CAVANAUGH: Patrick Cavanaugh.

SIGRIST: And he had come from Ireland also?

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Where in Ireland did he come from?

CAVANAUGH: He come from the south of Ireland, in Kerry.

SIGRIST: And had he been in America a long time before you met him?

CAVANAUGH: No, not too long. I forget now how long, but he could get around.

SIGRIST: And you had actually been in this country longer than he had.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes. I was in here a long time.

SIGRIST: Can you name your children for me? Name the children that you have.

CAVANAUGH: My oldest son, his name is John Cavanaugh. And the second one Tom, Thomas. And he died here about three years ago, a big, husky man. And then, John, Thomas, and Richard. That's all, I guess.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you have any daughters?

CAVANAUGH: Huh?

SIGRIST: Did you have any daughters? Did you have any girls?

CAVANAUGH: Betty. Just one, the one you see here. I had one girl and four boys. A big family to feed.
(she laughs)

SIGRIST: Let me ask you one final question. Are you happy that you came to America?

CAVANAUGH: I like America, but I'd go home any time.

SIGRIST: How many times have you been to Ireland to visit?

CAVANAUGH: Well, from the beginning it was five years or more before we went back, and then six years after that we went back again. I made three trips to Ireland before I got married.

SIGRIST: Did your parents ever come to America to live?

CAVANAUGH: They wouldn't come here. My father never come here, and my mother. I guess my father would, but my mother wouldn't come out here. I don't know why.

SIGRIST: She was happy where she was, I guess.

CAVANAUGH: She was. She had a nice little place there.

SIGRIST: How do you think your life might have been different if you had stayed in Ireland?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I'd be a farmer's wife digging in a little garden. (she laughs) They don't have that much work for any girls over there, like, not in where I lived. They were all farmers.

SIGRIST: So it would have been probably a harder life for you over there?

CAVANAUGH: Oh, yes. Outside, and every kind of hard work in the country, digging and everything. (they laugh) I never could do that.

SIGRIST: Well, Mrs. Cavanaugh, I want to thank you very much for letting me come out and ask you a few questions. See, you remembered a lot. (they laugh) And you

have a wonderful laugh, too.

CAVANAUGH: Well, I'm glad. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Lillian
Cavanaugh in Weathersfield, Connecticut, and today
is Sunday, March 28, 1993.