

EI-368

CHARLES MILOS

BIRTHDATE: JANUARY 24, 1902

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GREECE, 1920

AGE 17

PASSAGE ON "THE PATRAS"

PORT OF EMBARKATION: PATRAS

RESIDENCES: DOUVINI (ALBANIA), PATRAS
WORCESTER, MA

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Milos is the husband of Persephone Milos, Interview EI-367. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of the Oral History Project, 8/18/1995.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here today in Worcester, Massachusetts with Charles Milos, who came from Greece in 1920 when he was about seventeen years old. Today is August 9th, 1993, and we're here at the, at the St. Spiridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral here in Worcester, and Mrs. Milos is here with us. I want to say welcome, and I'm looking forward to hearing, I'll ask the questions and you then can fill me in...

MILOS: Go right ahead.

LEVINE: ...whatever. Okay. Start out please with your

birthdate.

MILOS: Say that again?

LEVINE: Your birthdate?

MILOS: Oh. 24th of January. Now ever since I came over I had too many birthdays. (he laughs)

LEVINE: Okay. Tell me...

MILOS: But we all, we all did. A lot of European people, they never kept track of the birthdays. They celebrate the same days and, and name days. So that's why we're never sure exactly what the birthday, birthday and the year. So let's say 1902?

LEVINE: Okay. Tell me about the, the name days. In other words, your name...

MILOS: All like, like St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St., every, all the saints. And we had, if my name was John, I would celebrate on St. John's day. They celeb, that's how they did celebrate.

LEVINE: So would there be, would there be several dates of birth that would be all St. John's day, that would celebrate...

MILOS: Well, well, don't, the days of birth don't interfere at all. Saints day, and forget the birthday. That's why we're never, we're never sure how old were we when we came over. But the birthday ends in, and name day, no, well, no connection. It's my birthday, but whenever, they never mention it at all. We celebrate only on St. Anne's day.

LEVINE: So it's, so it's really your name that determines the saints...

MILOS: For celebrating...

LEVINE: ...and the date doesn't matter?

MILOS: ...for, for celebration. Just the celebration.

LEVINE: I see. Well, tell me then about your name and what it was when you started out and what changes happened to you.

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MILOS: Well, I, I came over with the name of, that's, that's the real name of the family. Costanndinos Yanopolis.

LEVINE: Could you spell it?

MILOS: Well, I'd just assume write it that spell it. (they laugh) In the Greek language we never had no spelling.

LEVINE: Ah.

MILOS: Write it out, then that's it.

LEVINE: Okay. Okay, well, while your wife writes it out, say what changes happened to your name.

MILOS: Well, the changes happened and it happens with everybody. All the European countries, when they came over, they, they keep their name for just so long, but then again they get mingled up with the, and, and they call yourself an American, which the name goes with whatever they call you for American language. So my name was Costanndinos. So I came over. All Costanndinos from there, they were called

Charlies. So I got the name Charlie.

LEVINE: And how did the Milos come from...

MILOS: Milos came from, my grandmother of my father, her, her name was Amalia. Amalia for short is Milio [PH].
Milio for short.

LEVINE: That was her, her last name?

MILOS: My, my, my father's first name, my father's grandmother, Amalia. That's the first name. So for Amalia short was Milia or Milio. So while my father was a kid, to say, "Who is this kid?" This is Amalia's grandson. Amalia's grandson. Just because Amalia short was Milio, Milio's son, Milio's grandson, and that's how Milos came from. Milos. So that's the nickname. They know it by both names in the old country. Any, any documents, any papers of any kind, any transactions, they were all Yanopolis.
But the nickname, so you want to know now how, why and why I got my name Milos and I didn't keep the other one?

LEVINE: Yeah.

MILOS: Well, when I came over in 1923 we were happy to come over anyway, to begin with. Just like something different from hell to paradise, from there to here. That's how we believed then. And, of course, you've changed now. (he laughs) It isn't hell, yet, but it's almost. But anyway, when I came over, say now, we're talking about...

LEVINE: Your name.

MILOS: The name.

LEVINE: Milos.

m When I came over, about three years, like I said I was very glad to come over anyway. I was very enthused and very glad, my first desire was to become an American citizen. And in 19', when I came over 1920, in 1923, I was twenty years old, twenty-one years old, I joined the National Guard for three years. I was glad to do it. Like I said, I felt like I wanted to be an American. That's all there was to it. And when I, I'm all down from the, after three years from the National Guard, I became an

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American citizen, too. That's was my desire besides.

And the same time I knew I was going to be here for good. Married and my family, to make it easier for my family I changed the regular name and I used the nickname for short. Like some people do, some people don't. I got a brother that didn't. He still uses the same one. And I brought him over back in 19', thirty, thirty-five, forty years ago. But at the time just to make it easier for my, for my family, instead of Yanopolis, Milos is easier, and they know us by both names.

LEVINE: Well, tell me the name of the town you were born in Greece.

MILOS: Douvini. The same time, the town my did.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MILOS: Douvini.

LEVINE: Will you spell it for the tape?

MILOS: D-O-U-V-I-N-I. Douvini.

LEVINE: And, now, that was in Greece?

MILOS: That was, when I was born it was Turkey, that part of the country. And after the first world war and the Balkan war back in 1912, that's the time it changed. When, when the, Greece defeated Turkey, and they took that place over, then became Greece for a while. And afterward, different, well, like this is an international affair that, that they somehow, just because it was Greeks, and, part of the country was Greeks and Albanians, too, they separate that part of the country, it go to sort of Albania, like. But I was born, when I was born it was Turkey. And then 1912, after the war it was Greece for a while. And after that, I don't know how many years, maybe three or four years, and then they divided to Albania.

LEVINE: And now, now...

MILOS: Now it's Albania.

LEVINE: Albania.

MILOS: For a while it was, it was isolated from all the world, with the, the same way that the Russias were,

for when they were Bolsheviks, what do they call it.

And we were (unintelligible). In fact they separated us from all the, all the families and, and relatives that we had. We couldn't go back and forth. I, I, I applied ten, fifteen times to go to see my birth place, but I wasn't allowed. I don't know why, but somehow they wanted to isolate the Albanians alone, just so to make Albania. Because if they were mixed up with the rest of the world, well, they were coming back and forth, and they wouldn't have, they wouldn't, they wouldn't have so much way of keeping away from everybody, and make, make the name Albania.

LEVINE: I see. So it's after you were settled here in the United States that you could no longer go back?

MILOS: I couldn't, I couldn't go back.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MILOS: I tried but I couldn't. Although then they knew me. Of course, the name they did. That's where I came from. But, like I said, they isolated everybody from everybody.

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah. Well, when you were growing up, were there Turks, Albanians and Greeks in your...

MILOS: No, there were Turks and, and Greece. It was Greece when I left. They it became Albania afterwards.

LEVINE: Yeah. There were no Albanians...

MILOS: I was born in Turkey and I left, I left the country when it was Greece.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. There were no Albanians living in your town when you were there?

MILOS: Well, well, I, I, yeah, there were no Albanians. There, certain villages in Albania, the first language Albanian language. Certain villages in Albania they think more of Greece, and the first language were Greek instead of Albanians.

LEVINE: How did the Turks and the Greeks get along in your village? How did the Turks...

MILOS: We didn't have, we didn't have any Turks in our

village.

LEVINE: Oh, you didn't?

MILOS: All the, all the, all the Turks that we had, they used to work, used to work for us. Work with, taking care of the, the animals, and the agriculture, they used to work for us. No Turks in my village. They were all Orthodox. All Greek Orthodox.

LEVINE: What, how, was it a big village? Was it...

MILOS: No, about a hundred and twenty-five families.

LEVINE: Oh.

MILOS: Small.

LEVINE: So what did people do for work?

MILOS: Agriculture and mostly animals like sheep, goats, cows. That's what my father used to do. He used to buy livestock and sell it, buy and sell.

LEVINE: What was your father's name?

MILOS: Spiro. Spiridon. Like, like the church here now.
St. Spiridon.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And your mother? Name?

MILOS: Theodora. That's my, my daughter's name. That's how
my daughter got the Theodora name.

LEVINE: And your mother's maiden name?

MILOS: Liazos. L-I-A-Z-O-S. Liazos.

LEVINE: And did you have brothers and sisters in Greece?

MILOS: Oh, yeah. They were, I was the oldest one. Young
when I left. But after three or four years, four or
five years, maybe more, they died, they died. All I
have left is one sister. The other two or three
small ones, they died.

LEVINE: They died over there?

MILOS: Over there.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MILOS: They never, they never changed the village. I was the only one that left.

LEVINE: I see. Well, tell me about health care and medicine and, in, in the village when you were there.

MILOS: Very poor. Not much to say, because they never had, they never had enough. Of course, we had doctors. In fact I had two brothers of mine that were doctors after. But not much of, not much of the health care. Not much.

LEVINE: Did, were there folk remedies. Do you remember? Did people, did people do, sort of customs that people had about how to treat sickness that were...

MILOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...handed down?

MILOS: Well, they were, they were pretty healthy. The only thing that interfered too much with our lives over there was T.B. That's the only thing. But the rest

of them were all taken care of anyway. But T.B. was the worst one.

LEVINE: What did people do for T.B.? Do you remember what kinds of remedies they had?

MILOS: Well, all I know, that I remember a couple in my own village, they were, they were bad enough in order to go around the village or visit anybody they had to use a donkey to go. They were, they were pretty sick. They were pretty sick. They didn't too much. They didn't too much. They didn't have too much to do. That was Turkey now.

LEVINE: So were donkeys the means of transportation in, in your village?

MILOS: Donkeys, mules and horses. Very few automobiles. Very few.

LEVINE: Did most families have a donkey or a horse?

MILOS: Right. Right. That, that was the only sort of transportation. Any, anything to, to help the family. Every family had something. Either a donkey

or a mule or a horse for their own use.

LEVINE: And what about wagons? Did you...

MILOS: No. No wagons. Well, the whole country was pretty rough. A lot of stones and everything. You had to use automobiles to get closer to the houses.

LEVINE: Yeah. Could you describe the house where you lived when you were living...

MILOS: Well, it was, it was made then, it was, it was made a duplex, like. My father had a brother. And my grandfather, when they built the house, it was built, an, an outside door, you go, you walk into a patio. And then two doors separated, it make it duplex house. When my grandfather died, then one of the brothers got one side, the other brother got the other side.

LEVINE: And that would be a usual way of...

MILOS: That's the, that's, yeah, that's the...

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, and did you have water? Did you have

running water?

MILOS: Well, they had to deliver the water. They had to go outside and, pots, the village, they get around where they bring around. Not running water in the houses.
No.

LEVINE: And do you remember your mother washing clothes?

MILOS: Well, when my, when my mother died, I was six years old. And I had an uncle and a grandfather in, further in, in Greece. This is Turkey what we're talking about now. Now I'm in Greece. I was the oldest one, and my uncle and grandfather had a place of business in, in Greece. So when my, when my mother died, being the oldest one of the boy, they took me over there to work with them. I went to school there.

LEVINE: What, what...

MILOS: The name of the city was Patras. Patras.

LEVINE: P-...

MILOS: P-A-T-R-A-S. Patras. And I was over there with grammar school. And I went couple times back and forth, but high school, grammar school and high school.

LEVINE: Oh. So what was the difference between Patras and the Turkish...

MILOS: A lot, a lot difference. A lot of, well, not only Turkish, but the village, the country itself was different. More, more business. Well, it was a city to begin with. Forty thousand at the time population instead of a hundred twenty-five families. It was between village and a city. All kinds of business. And it was a seaport, too, besides, Patras was.

LEVINE: What kind of business did your grandfather and uncle have?

MILOS: My grandfather and uncle had, were in the coffee business. We used to buy the coffee, roast the coffee, ground the coffee, and me as kid delivered it to the coffee houses, besides selling to the houses.

LEVINE: So the coffee houses would then what, export it? Or

reuse...

MILOS: No, no, no. They use it. When I say coff, when I say coffee house, what they had is coffee, coffee, the made your pieces of it, but they had different drinks and different sweets that they used to sell. Coffee houses, like, it's a business by itself. Coffee house.

LEVINE: Oh, it's like a store. Uh-huh. Yeah

MILOS: So, I used to, well, get up early with my grandfather, roast the coffee.

LEVINE: What you say, rush it?

MILOS: Rush? No, we're Patras, in Greece.

LEVINE: No. You say you'd get up...

MILOS: Roast, roast the coffee. Roast.

LEVINE: Oh, roast. Uh-huh.

MILOS: Roast the coffee.

LEVINE: Roast it.

MILOS: We get, you know, coffee, well, (unintelligible) like they would deliver it. They sell, they would roast the coffee, they ground the coffee and sell it to different families, because a family used to come in and buy half a pound, quarter of a pound, pound, and me, deliver the different coffee houses coffee.

LEVINE: Did you do that when you were going to school, too?

MILOS: I did that when I was going to school.

LEVINE: So you did it before you went to school...

MILOS: After.

LEVINE: I mean before the day...

MILOS: We, we roast and ground it before I went to school...

LEVINE: Yeah.

MILOS: ...and I delivered afterwards.

LEVINE: Afterwards. (they laugh) You had a busy day, huh?

MILOS: Very busy day. For a youngster, six or seven years old, I was very busy. Very, very busy. I can't say that I had a good young life. I can't say that. My mother died, and being the oldest one, and being three or four kids in the family, easier for my father, because no, no mother, mother died, easier to have less children. Which a year or two, no, yeah. A year or two later he got married, second marriage with a wife, and he start another family then.

LEVINE: So what do you remember about school in Patras?

MILOS: I remember going to school, and I, I, different trips that we made with my wife after I got married here. We went over there, and I was looking to find out the places that I was into when I was a kid. And the first thing that I noticed when I went looking for the school that I went to, it was, it was during the summertime and the place was closed. I looked at it, I realized I knew what it was. I remembered exactly the steps going up and down and everything. Then, but I couldn't go there because it was during the

summertime. Like, we visit the place in the summertime and the place was closed, like the school was closed. So I made my business to see it the next time. The next time that I went there it was during the fall. The school itself was demolished. The building was down, and there was something else, houses instead of the school.

LEVINE: When you think about going to school there, and what you know about school here from your own children...

MILOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...how is it different?

MILOS: Well, no, not much difference. Not much difference. Exactly the same. Different teacher in every class. First, second, third and fourth, the grammar school. And then one, two, three, high school. Four years of grammar, three years of high.

LEVINE: Well, wasn't it unusual at your, at the time that you were there to go through high school? That was a lot of education to get, wasn't it?

MILOS: It was. It was. But we went just the same. I liked to go to school. I was doing pretty good, too. Doing pretty good.

LEVINE: Yeah. So, what else do you remember? Were you religious? Were your grandfather and uncle religious?

MILOS: Yes. Yes. We were going, going to a church. Belonged to a church. And I'll say not every Sunday, but quite a few times in a month go to, go to church.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you celebrate the name days in, in Greece, in Patras?

MILOS: In Patras, no I didn't. To begin with, we didn't have no, we lived, we worked in the front and we lived in the back. Like the Chinese did here at a time. They had lived in the front, they had laundry in the back. We didn't have no, after my uncle, after years my uncle got married, and then we had a home to go to. But before we lived in back of the place that we worked.

LEVINE: Well, you were, you were like, with all, men. You

were with your grandfather...

MILOS: Right. Right.

LEVINE: ...your uncle and you.

MILOS: Me? Yeah. The three of us.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MILOS: Like I said, my life as a, as a youngster wasn't very.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MILOS: It wasn't very good. But that's what it was.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything you did for fun? Enjoyment in Patras?

MILOS: Not much enjoyment. Not much. I was very, very, very much deprived out of anything of a youngster's life. Like I said, because my grandfather and an uncle. And no home to live to. We lived in the back. After my uncle died it was a little different,

but not much difference. Because I was, I wasn't the child of the house. I was the nephew and the grand, and the grandson. Let me repeat that again. My, my life in, as a youngster...

LEVINE: Yeah.

MILOS: ...it wasn't much, not much to remember.

LEVINE: Do you remember the circumstances under which you came to the United States? What prompted you to come?

MILOS: What part, what part, what?

LEVINE: What prompted you to come here?

MILOS: Oh. Well, at the time...

MRS. MILOS: Why don't you tell them to...(there is a pause)

LEVINE: Okay.

MILOS: At, at the time, in Albania now, it really was Greece then, there was nothing for a youngster to do,

except, like I said, in the old country all they had was livestock and agriculture. And every, every youngster, when it came to age of seventeen, sixteen and over, seventeen, eighteen, they would try to immigrate to go somewhere else to see if they can make something of their lives. So that's, that's how, that's how I came over. A lot, a lot of youngsters that were my age before me, they were here.

LEVINE: You came from Patras?

MILOS: I came from Patras.

LEVINE: So you never went back to your little town to stay...

MILOS: I never did.

LEVINE: ...once that you, once you left?

MILOS: Never did. Never did. In between going to school days I did, but after never did. Like I said, then after the war I remember, the world war I was in Greece. And the Balkan, Balkan war I was in Greece, too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MILOS: So...

LEVINE: Oh, right. So you came after that.

MILOS: After.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MILOS: After.

LEVINE: What had you heard about, what had you heard about America before you came?

MILOS: All I knew was something different than any other country. Things that any other country they never had. Much, much more advanced, although it was a new, new country. Because Greece and, is, all the, all the Balkans, and all the Europe, they were countries before, before America was. But they advance so much, so everybody was going, and liked to come over like we did. Boat loads. Two, three hundred a time. So everybody had a desire to come to

advance himself into something out of himself in the United States. And I did. When I came over, it took me forty days in the boat, sea, travelling in sea forty days to get to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Well, tell me what you remember of the Balkan war and the first world war. You personally. How did it effect you?

MILOS: I remember I was going to school at the time in Patras. I remember that they, all the Greeks, they came to an age of twenty-one, they had to go to service for one or two years, and then go back to their own life. But when the war start, they, they had a lot of trouble. And the country was poor anyway. And they had a lot of trouble. But I remember the fighting. And I remember pictures and different things that they, they have, in a kind of they were fighting, they way they were killing each other during the war.

LEVINE: Did you actually see fighting?

MILOS: No, I didn't.

LEVINE: No.

MILOS: No. That was in the city.

LEVINE: But you would see it like in newspapers or something...

MILOS: Newspapers and different pictures that they had, come out, with different villages as they, as they advance, defeating the Turkey. As they advance they're drawing pictures on cardboard that we used to see in school.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MILOS: Right. Another thing that I remember. Going to school, one week out of, one day out of the week we used to go, well, for, for the day off, like, out of the school, we didn't go to school. And we all, we had to drill, eight, nine years old, to drill to know how to fight, when you get where they used to fight.

LEVINE: So what did they, what did they teach you on those drills?

MILOS: Well, going to school, we had to, we had to know and copy, by hand even, all the European countries, just to know, if you ever go there, to know how to advance. To know how many rivers, how many bridges, and how many hills, how many mountains. Just so to get acquainted with the country. That's, that's was the, that was the, part of the schooling. Because everybody was fighting then. I don't know why, but they did. That's what they did.

LEVINE: And you didn't learn actually how to shoot a gun, or...

MILOS: No. No. I didn't.

LEVINE: ...that kind of thing?

MILOS: I didn't.

LEVINE: No. Not as a child.

MILOS: From there, from school to here, and that's all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MILOS: But then I remember when I came over, anxious to see, travelling for forty days, anxious to see like over there what they're telling us, you go to see the Statue of Liberty. (unintelligible) noticing the Statue of Liberty, we thought it was, we came to, to paradise. I thought it was, we were so happy you can't imagine.

LEVINE: Well, when you came did you travel alone?

MILOS: Well, yeah. I didn't have no, well, no, not alone. I had cousin of mine and different other, the two or three other kids from the same village. I wasn't alone. But none of my relatives. Just a cousin. Just a cousin I had.

LEVINE: Do you remember saying good-bye to your uncle and your grandfather and your uncle's wife?

MILOS: Oh, yeah. I remember, I remember it. Yeah.

LEVINE: Did...

MILOS: But it was a habit for everybody. It wasn't too much to say or to do, because everybody was on the same

schedule. Came to the right age, seventeen, eighteen, they had to go, because the country never, never had enough for you to do to advance yourself. So everybody the same thing.

LEVINE: And you would have had to go in the army, would you if you...

MILOS: No, I didn't. I didn't. When I came over, when I came over, my first desire was to be an American citizen. So the first chance that I had I enlisted in the National Guard for three years. And after I came out my, my next desire was to be, to do, do something business for myself. So that's what I tried. I worked for restaurants for about four or five years, and the first thing I know I had a place of my own. And I kept it up until then. 1925 till, up until my retired time.

LEVINE: Okay. I want to talk about that. But first let's just say the name of the boat that you came on.

MILOS: Yeah. Patras. P-A-T-R-A-S. Patras.

LEVINE: And, and did you have examinations and...

MILOS: All they did at the time, they examined the eyes.
And that's all.

LEVINE: On the boat?

MILOS: No, no. Before you get on the boat.

LEVINE: Before you get on.

MILOS: In order to be, to be entitled to come, you had to be
examined in the eyes before, nothing else.

LEVINE: What did you bring with you? What did you have when
got here.

MILOS: Exactly the way you see me now. (they laugh) Just
my clothes and that's all. When I came over I had
two sets, two sets of cousins here, when I came over.
Two from my, from my father's side. They were here
in Worcester. So I came over to them. Then from
then those that introduced me to the place to go to
work and I start for myself.

LEVINE: Did, when you were on the boat, was it a big room

with a lot of bunk beds?

MILOS: Oh, yeah. A lot of bunk beds. And a lot of them they kept on the top of the boat, on a open space.

LEVINE: On the deck?

MILOS: Yeah, on deck.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MILOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about food? Do you remember how you were, how...

MILOS: Yeah, we had pretty good food.

LEVINE: Was there a dining room, or did they give you like a dish and...

MILOS: It was, it was a dining room. Well, it was classes. Separate, the boat was separate in classes. First class, second class, third class. First class used to go in the dining room. Second class would have a

different other room, dining room. Then the third class you get it in here and you go up on the deck and eat.

LEVINE: What were you travelling?

MILOS: Third class. (he laughs) That's how much I could pay.

LEVINE: And, and forty days? That was a long...

MILOS: Forty days. A long time. Long time. Anxious to see something. All you could see was nothing. Nothing. Just water and see and that's all.

LEVINE: And you didn't, you didn't...

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: ...actually see the Statue of Liberty when you came in?

MILOS: Forty, I did.

LEVINE: Oh, you did.

MILOS: I did. I, we noticed it from so far away before we came, getting close to it. We were still in the boat travelling, but we noticed the Statue of Liberty. And like I said before, when we saw the Statue of Liberty we thought we saw God. We came to paradise, so happy you can't imagine.

LEVINE: Was the boat mostly full of Greek people, the boat you...

MILOS: Yeah, mostly Greek. Mostly Greek.

LEVINE: And do you remember Ellis Island?

MILOS: Yes. Part of it. Not much.

LEVINE: What do you remember?

MILOS: Just coming out of the boat. Different, different, of us, they went different directions.

(unintelligible) Boston, Chicago, different states. And they all give us a label, Put it there where we going to go, and what, which direction we're going to go in the Ellis Island to get, to get the (unintelligible) you want to get. And it was all, it was all a big commotion because a lot of people, a lot of people which they didn't even know what they were talking about. No language to speak to anyway, and everybody, strangers, too, which are there, a lot of big, big commotion. Big commotion.

LEVINE: So you, nobody met you there? You...

MILOS: No, nobody met me there. Only I know coming into Worcester with my label, from there they put me in a train and then came to Worcester. Right at the depot in the Worcester, the Union Station in Worcester, her grandfather, my, my wife's grandfather, he was here. He knew that we were coming, there were some kids from the same village. So he came over to meet us over there. And he meet us right out of the train, and he brought us then to a place where we had other people that we knew.

LEVINE: So you must have had to have money when you first

arrived at Ellis Island?

MILOS: Not too much. Enough to pay for the ticket, and then maybe fifteen, twenty dollars. But I know was coming other people that I know, my cousin, so I wasn't afraid of that.

LEVINE: But you had to show some money?

MILOS: Yeah, you had to. You had to show. You had to have so much to come out. Besides your ticket you had so much. Just enough wanted to get the distance you wanted to get to.

LEVINE: So, you didn't have to stay at Ellis? You just, you were just at Ellis Island for a matter of hours?

MILOS: Oh, yes. A matter of hours. Yeah, for a matter of hours, and after that we go different directions, all of us.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything that struck you as different about the United States when you first came...

MILOS: Yeah. The only thing, the only thing that struck me different, I saw a fellow, I don't know where, but he found a banana, and he ate the banana without peeling it. (he laughs) And I was looking at, I was looking at him. Then the next thing that struck my eye was they delivering ice, cake of ice, hundred, hundred pounds of ice, with the prongs there, the way they carry them from a place to another place, then with the, deliver the ice. Then from then that's it. We left, came to Worcester.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And so when you got to Worcester you stayed with your cousins first?

MILOS: Right. Right.

LEVINE: And then you went to work soon after that?

MILOS: Yes. Well, it wasn't too much after a week or two, two weeks. After we're all changed, we, they clothed us, American clothes and everything, then at places, then at getting Greeks again, they had restaurants. Most of the people that they know. Most likely they were amongst themselves at the time. Not too much mingling with any, any other,

but each one of the nationalities was different anyway. Not only Greeks. Irishmen, French, Irish, German peoples. They were all to themselves for a while. Then after you get to know people, work with people, then you get mixed up like.

LEVINE: So you went into the restaurant business?

MILOS: Restaurant business.

LEVINE: And how did you start out? What were you doing first?

MILOS: I was picking up dishes in a cafeteria, self service cafeteria. Picking up dishes from a table, bring them back in the kitchen for them to wash it. Then I worked as a, helping on the counter, making coffee on the counter, because I couldn't speak very good English anyway for about five or six months. Making coffee, bringing in the dishes from the kitchen to the (unintelligible) work with, bringing in the pies from downstairs, upstairs (unintelligible) to sell it. And then I stop in front of myself I says, "Well, how long this is going to go on?" Counter man, dishwasher, picking up dishes. Then I worked

in the kitchen, too. I asked the fellow, I asked the boss to give me (unintelligible) the kitchen. He says, "Why do you want to go in the kitchen?" "I want to know how to cook. I want to see, see what's, what am I going to do after I leave here." So I worked in the kitchen for about seven, eight months, nine months. Short order cook. Then partly cooking for about, from 1920 to 1925. And after that I borrow five hundred dollars, and I went in partnership with other fellow with one these lunch counters, sliding those, you didn't see that, but you never heard it maybe. Was only, was only maybe fifteen or twenty stools. Sliding doors in a lunch counter. Two, three steps from the ground up to go. And what do you had in the lunch counter, what they call lunch, they call them diners now. But lunch counters, all you had was a counter, cook in the back and serve in the front. That's it. That was the first place that I held. And I remember distinctly the place that I had here, the spot that I had my diner here. For about three or four years.

LEVINE: Where was it?

MILOS: On, right across from American Steel and Wire

Company on Millberry Street in Worcester. And I sold that place, the lunch counter, and I bought another place on the corner of King and Shepherd [PH] right in front of the city hospital in Worcester.

LEVINE: Now were you on your own by then...

MILOS: On my own...

LEVINE: ...or you were, or you were partnered?

MILOS: On my own there. On my own. After, after five years I was on my own. Then just before, well, about 19', the age is now 1937, '38. All these years, five years for somebody else, and the rest of the years myself. And then I left Worcester. Of course we got married in 1929. We didn't say anything about that.

LEVINE: Why don't you, why don't you say, did you have your eye on your wife?

MILOS: If I what?

LEVINE: Were you interested in, in your...

MILOS: I was. I was. Well, like I said, like my wife said, I came over 1920. (unintelligible) came over we knew each other from the old country. We were going to school together in 1923. Then I started visiting, because her uncle lived with her mother, with her family, visiting there. That's how I got acquainted with the, with my wife. And I went over there visiting quite a few times. So one of the nights we were sitting in the kitchen. It was (unintelligible), me and, and my father-in-law. And I told her, I says, "I'd like to see you. I'd like to talk to you a second." And we went inside and I said, I said I want, said, "Yesterday you told me that I was too young." I says, "I'm young, too. I'll wait." (he cries) And that's how we got acquainted. It was a couple of years without, and then we got engaged 1927, and got married 1929. And here we are.

LEVINE: What was it you liked about your wife?

MILOS: First of all I liked the family life. I had the family life in the old country. And the house

itself. I like the whole thing, the whole environment. My mother-in-law and (unintelligible).
(he cries)

LEVINE: Well, you got what you wanted.

MILOS: Right. I knew I was going to be here, because a lot of us at that time used to come over for about three or four years, go back to the old country, get married, stay there for six months or a year and come back again. And that's what they were doing. But me, I knew, I didn't have no place, because I lost my mother six years old.

LEVINE: Right.

MILOS: New family style. My father (unintelligible), I says to myself, I says there's no place for me over there. And it's no use anyway. If I was going to go over there, I wasn't, my wife was in United States, but I was going to marry one of the girls over there and come back like that, the rest of it.
So I says, this is, this is me here. I'm going to get married here. I like the country. I'm in business for myself, so that's what I'm going to do.

That's what I did. I 1929.

LEVINE: So, but, when you got married you were in business for yourself by then?

MILOS: Right. Myself. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, okay, so then you went into business for yourself, and then you had the lunch counter, or you had a restaurant?

MILOS: I sold the lunch counter that we're talking about.

LEVINE: Okay.

MILOS: And I sold the other place, the second place that I had on the corner of King and Shepherd [PH]. And I worked for somebody else for two, three years. Then we moved to Marlborough. I was, I was, I was talking to a salesman that he used to work for Crown Quality Ice Cream. Another Greek company. I said I'm looking for a place to buy, to go in business for myself. You, you, he was a, a sales manager. I says, you're going around a lot. If you can find a place, let me know. Either in Worcester or in one

of the villages around like Leominster or Fitchberg or different. So finally he came over one day, he says, "Charlie, I got a place for you." He says, "I got two places." He says, one in Leominster which you don't know. (unintelligible) A village about three quarters of an hour away from Worcester. And another place in Marlborough. In Leominster was a liquor place. And that's another thing that desire that I had. At the time, even now, in order to have a liquor license you had to be an American citizen.

I, I became myself the first chance that I had. I couldn't become a citizen that was five years in either states. So I had to wait. The first thing I did, I became American citizen. And not only I was happy to do it, but I wanted to show the rest of the people that I'm American citizen, I wanted to get a liquor license. Then everybody knew I had to be American citizen to have a liquor license. So I went to, to this salesman, Jack Tallager [PH] was his name, a nice fellow. He says, "Charlie, it's a place in Leominster, liquor, and it's a place in Marlborough, luncheonette." Now Marlborough had a community, Greek community of its own with a church, school, Greek school and everything. Leominster hasn't. You had to travel about fifteen, twenty

minutes or half an hour from Leominster to Fitchberg, with no Greek school, no Greek church. So I made up my mind that I want to be close there to go, my family, that you get my family to go to church and the school. So I made, I bought the place in Marlborough. Well, the way I started over there was, I didn't have much money to do it, but I was, well, the way they did it at the time. I went to the ice cream company that was the, the most and the biggest product that the luncheonette used to sell. Ice cream and, and sodas. So I, I see the manager there, and I says, "I found a place in Marlborough, and I want to buy that place. Is there any way of you helping me do it?" He says, "Yes, but you got to buy my own ice cream." I says, "That's all right." Buy the ice, as long as you're going to help me do it. And I was, I bought the place in Marlborough, and paying so much more, buy, when I, buying ice cream so much more a gallon to pay my debt to them. And that's how I started. In Marlborough I had, I had a luncheonette place, then I had a liquor license again.

LEVINE: Oh.

MILOS: In Marlborough. I had two places for, for certain, for three or four years. And after a while, well, that, that's, around '40 and '41 the second world war started. (someone whispers)

LEVINE: Could you tell him I'll call him back? Okay.

MILOS: So after a while when I had to places I sold one. I sold the luncheonette and I kept the liquor, which was that my idea, my, (unintelligible). And that's how it went. It went pretty good. After, educated my family. Both college education, two, we had a small family, but nice. Very good. We lived a nice family life. Very good. Very good. (he cries) So then after a while I sold the luncheonette, too, and I bought a restaurant, like. And my son, after graduated from high, from college, he wanted to get in and take my business. I says, "George, I spend all the kind of money for you to educate you, are you going in the restaurant business like I did? I went in the restaurant business, I wouldn't do anything else but, but restaurant business." He says, "Daddy, that's all right. I'll take all over." So from then I took it over. My son took it over. My place. And then we sold that place. No,

the redeveloper in Marlborough came, and knock some of the buildings down, which put me out of business.

I stay out of business two years, that I find a place and I bought the last place that I had in Marlborough. Liquor, and I bought, I bought the property. I, I collect it all together, about a little better than a hundred thousand dollars, what I had in cash, and mortgaged my house to, to, to get, to get this place. And my son was going to manage it, which that's what I did. Nice place. He took it, he did a very good job, him and and his partner. He says, Daddy, I got a fellow. I know it was pretty hard for a fellow like I did. I had a tough time, myself in business all by hisself [sic].

Well, this place was bigger place, too. And I said to myself, we got to have, I'm not going to work. I was getting older then at the time. But I got to have somebody to work with my son. So he says, "Daddy, I got, I got the fellow I want to go in business with." My son, the first job that he had after he went to college and majored in psychology, he had the first job would be Boy Scouts of America in, in New York. He was a, he was a, in the executive board. And he met different fellows that they had scout masters. And one of the scout

masters, he was doing meeting with the boy scouts, he met one of the fellows, then he says this is the fellow to be for partner. So he got the two of them. They didn't have any money. I'll supply all the money. I says, "You boys go to work, and you don't have to have the money. That's, that's my money. Go ahead." Go right ahead and did a good job. The place, we had to place for about seven, eight years?

MRS. MILOS: Ten.

MILOS: Ten years? Ten years. He employ fifty-five people in a restaurant. Between every, regular workers and part time workers, fifty-five to sixty people, which it was all right. It was a good (unintelligible). But my son and this other fellow, this other young fellow, nice fellow, too, they did a good job. They made very good. And there we are.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Well, do you know what prompted to sell one lunch counter or restaurant and go into the next one?

MILOS: Well, the only that prompted me because I was

getting up on the scale and still stand, stand still. From the lunch counter, I bought the place on the corner of King and Shepherd. It was a store then, not a lunch counter. I made, you know, in food business, too. Then from then, then I was talking to these Irish fellows, head salesman, told them I was looking for a place. I was, I was looking for something, something bigger, something better. That's the place, that's how we got in Marlborough and got these places, two places for a couple, three or four years, and bought this property, which that was the end of it.

LEVINE: What are you most proud of that you've done and accomplished in your life?

MILOS: What, proud of, what I accomplished? Well, I'm proud that I made a good American citizen. (he cries) I kept my business very good, very, very straight, and, and working hard to do it. And proud that my family, my wife and my family, and proud, and proud of everything that I did. Everything that I did. Proud for myself, proud for my family, proud for my country.

LEVINE: Do you feel that in some ways, how do you, how do you answer the question of how much are you Greek and how much you are American? Are there ways about you...

MILOS: Well, after so many years, after so many years, I didn't, of course, I've always said I'm a Greek. But I'm not ashamed to say I'm American, too. Because my ideal, like I said, desire is to be an American citizen. I enlist in the service, National Guard. I went for three years, and then I got my citizenship papers. And then I went in business for myself. And, of course, I care and talk about Greece, but not as much as I do for the American. I'm here for seventy years, seventy-three years, since 1920. Seventy-three years. So I'm not ashamed to say I'm Greek, but I'm not ashamed I'm American, because I did, I did just as good and better for some Americans that were born here. I did. Proud of that, proud of my family. Very good. Very good.

LEVINE: Tell me how Worcester has changed since you've been...

MILOS: Oh, yeah. It's...

LEVINE: What do you remember about early Worcester? Maybe that would be...

MILOS: Early Worcester, I remember, because it was a little smaller than what it was now. It was a little more in population. But the changes are, and, and maybe I notice, the first world war, Balkan war, second war, I notice that every war was a change in life of every, of every country. Because of the mixing up with going fighting in different country, some of the soldiers, their own soldiers left there, some of the others partly came over. So it was a mix up, it was always, it was always some kind of mix and trouble. But the, the biggest change that I notice, after the Vietnam. After that. And then we started getting the drug in, in the country, and that's how the whole trouble starts to my estimation. Lot of difference. Lot of difference. We used to be, didn't, didn't make any difference. Of course, we all kept to ourselves. Up until the time when we got married and we made families, to get mixed up, because our kids went to school, and we get mixed up with different families. And we mingled up with

everybody. But we're always kept to yourself. But we're always thinking and had the idea that I'm here, I'm American, I got family, I'm going to stay here, and that's it. That's it.

LEVINE: Can you say anything about Worcester in the early days that you were here?

MILOS: Well, I could say that a lot, Worcester was the second industrial city without being the seaport. Worcester. Not a seaport. But Worcester manufacture about everything that you can think of. Everything. And everybody was working in factories. Everybody. At the time, naturally less automobiles. Well, I remember when I had a place on Millberry Street, the lunch counter that I was telling you, at four, five o'clock, American Steel would come, American Steel and Wire Company, employ about three or four thousand people in two shifts. They used to work day and night. Nine and ten hours a shift. But at five o'clock when the shift change, people walking up the street, all you can see just, just people. The street was full of people. And in the morning, all the factories blowing the horn that they open up and they start, you know, start the

day. It was different altogether. Much, much better diff, much better, better feeling, better, better, different altogether. Different altogether.

As years went by then, well, at the time, we were very, we were working like, like slaves, for the people that had business like I did. But we didn't, we didn't have much, no, no unions or nothing. In fact, I was one of the organizers in the restaurant business back in 1922, '23, '23, to organize unions.

But to my estimation at the time we need, we had to have unions, because we, we thought the boss was our god. We couldn't say "booeey" [PH] in front of the boss. So after the unions it became a little different. Changed hours, too. We used to work twelve hours a day in the restaurant business. Six and a half days a week. Twelve, six times twelve is seventy-two, and six, seventy-eight hours a week. Half a day off a week. But after the unions, which like I was I was one of the organizers, we worked, made it eight hours instead. So, quite a change from then. Lot of, lot of difference. Became better. But at the time, like I said, we need, we need, we had to have somebody for unionized. But the, the unions to me, they overdid it. And they chased all the factories out of Worcester, out of

everybody. Out of ev, of all the cities. And too much unions, they were looking for, every year they were looking for something different. For something more out of the manufacturers. (unintelligible) the business but something more, which a lot of them were forced to move out and go in places where they had to find cheaper labor. And that's how, to my estimation, that's how Worcester is in this condition now, because of, because of the unions. The unions overdid it, to my estimation.

LEVINE: Are there any ways that you have kept, customs or ways that you kept that you feel, you learned in Greece and you kept them up here in America?

MILOS: Well, the, the family, the family life, we did. After we got married. Both Greek, both the same village. We kept the family life. She stayed home and I was going to work. We felt as though, I did, I felt as though my wife stayed and home and I'll take care of, I'll, I'll bring the bacon. That's, that's what I felt. And that's what I did. That's the only thing we kept. And, well, different other things that the, is, is a Greek custom. But, like I said, after you have children and you mixed up, and

then you change quite a bit. But still with the ideals and the way, the life, the way, the life we, we liked to live. A family life.

LEVINE: Do you think you treated your son and your daughter differently, treat a boy differently than a girl...

MILOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...which would be a way that you would have learned in Greece.

MILOS: Right, right. The only thing that I can tell you is when my daughter came, it was the oldest one, the first one, (unintelligible) it was the daughter. When became sixteen years old and seventeen, she didn't ask me or her mother to get a driver's license. But if she did she'd never get it anyway.

I never allow her to drive until after she got married then. But that's, then that's the only restriction that we had. Other than that everything was all right. Just free to do as much as they can.

And well, the boy, we thought, we thought we educate the boy more than we did on the, on the girl, our daughter, because we expected the daughter

not to have a profession of her own because she was going to get married. And that's, that's the idea we had.

LEVINE: And say for the tape your son and your daughter's name.

MILOS: The name? Our daughter's name was Theo, Theodora. That's my mother's name. Theodora, it's her grandmother. My mother name. And George, I had a brother that had died named George. So his godfather, which he came from the same village, he knew the family. That's why he name George, because of my brother.

LEVINE: Is there anything else, how about this phase of your life. How do you feel about this time in your life. You're just about ninety.

MILOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: How are you now?

MILOS: I, I can't feel any better. Very well satisfied. And considering my age and my sickness, I can use

the cane, but I can do everything I want to do. We still go to Florida with my wife for six months, and thank God we're doing according about what's going to happen tomorrow.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Is there anything else that you'd like to say before we close?

MILOS: Well, I think we covered everything. Of course, it's a lot of years. I don't know if I said everything I covered. But if you can remember anything, if you want, if you have a question, you ask me. I'll tell you.

LEVINE: Well, I think, I think we have a really good story. I want to thank you very much. Most interesting, and you should be proud.

MILOS: I am.

LEVINE: You really accomplished a great deal in your life.

MILOS: I am. And I'll tell this to everybody.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

EI-368/CHARLES MILOS

MILOS: Thank God. I says, the way I feel, I don't think there's any, anybody else better than me. No trouble at all. No family trouble. Very good life. Honest working life, and very good family. Very good family. A good life.

LEVINE: Well, I want to thank you very much. I've been with Charles Milos, who came from Greece in 1920 when he was about seventeen years old. Today is August 9th, 1993. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm signing off.