

EI-372  
APHRODHITI TEROVA MULLO  
BIRTHDATE: MAY 16, 1907  
INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 10, 1993  
RUNNING TIME: 18:53  
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE  
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: WORCESTER, MA  
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, 1/1996  
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

ALBANIA, 1928  
AGE 19

SHIP: "THE MAURETANIA"  
PORT: BRINDISI  
RESIDENCES  
? ALBANIA: KORÇË  
? US: WORCESTER, MA

HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Other ladies are present and comment from time to time singly and in chorus. Single voices are identified as VOICE.

LEVINE: Okay. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here in Worcester, Massachusetts. And I'm with a number of ladies who came from Albania, who are now in the Illyrian Gardens Retirement Home, and, and I'm very happy to have so many people from Albania and to have a chance to talk with you.

VOICE: That's wonderful [not understood] family over here.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

VOICE: Some - some [not understood]

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I'm going to start by interviewing one at a time.

VOICE: Yeah.

LEVINE: So we, if the others would not talk while we talk, okay?

VOICE: No. No.

LEVINE: We'll begin with Aphroditi Terova Mullo...

MULLO: Yes.

LEVINE: who came to the United States from Albania in 1928 when you were nineteen years of age.

MULLO: Yes.

LEVINE: And you came on The Mauretania.

MULLO: Mauretania.

LEVINE: Mauretania.

MULLO: Mauretania.

LEVINE: Okay. Why don't we start by you telling me your birth date. When, what day...

VOICE: Is a big [not understood]

MULLO: I born May 16.

LEVINE: And what year were you born?

MULLO: Let's see now. Two, eight, seven, seven.

LEVINE: 1907?

MULLO: Yes. That's too much [not understood]

LEVINE: Okay. So how old are you today?

VOICE: That's a secret.

LEVINE: A secret?

MULLO: No. Seven, eighty-four, eight-five.

LEVINE: Okay. Now tell me what town you lived in when you lived in Albania.

MULLO: Korçë.

LEVINE: Korçë.

MULLO: Korçë, Albania.

LEVINE: Okay. And tell me what Korçë was like.

MULLO: My, in my time it was very nice. Very nice.

VOICE: Speak.

LEVINE: Tell, tell, tell me, what...

MULLO: Yeah. In my, in my case, my father, he was very wealthy, but not the rest of them. They were, they wasn't.

LEVINE: What, what did you father do for work?

MULLO: Well, he had a liquor store, variety store, and he, I mean, field, you know, agriculture, beside that.

LEVINE: So did...

MULLO: Ranch, ranch. And the workers, they work for my father.

LEVINE: So you, so would your father buy like livestock and then sell it, or...

MULLO: No. Not, he was selling in the store. He used to make the wine by heself, the whiskey by heself, and he used to sell them in the store. All kind of things in the store. Variety, you know, sugar, you know, everything.

LEVINE: Did you ever help your father in the store?

MULLO: No, no. That time the girls, they don't.

LEVINE: The girls don't. Well, what did you do as a girl growing up in Albania? What, what was...

MULLO: I went to school. And I was twelve years old, twelve years old they stopped the schools there because the war or something. And I was staying inside, in the house. We used to crochet, we used to do the housework, something like that. So...

LEVINE: Did you have any duties, any chores that you had to do, you yourself did?

MULLO: No, I used to read...

VOICE: House cleaning and everything.

LEVINE: You used to read.

MULLO: Read. Because when you grow up up there they won't let you go in the school, all the girl to be outside with the, the boys or something. You know, it was different. It was old school that time. So.

LEVINE: What was your mother's name?

MULLO: Catherine.

LEVINE: And, and what was her maiden name?

MULLO: Vasil.

LEVINE: V-E-S...

MULLO: Vasil. (voices off-mic)

VOICE: Vasil, Vasil -

LEVINE: I-

MULLO: Vi - vi--

VOICE: [prompting]V-A---S-I-L

MULLO: V-A-S-I-L. Vasil. Vasil.

LEVINE: And, and what was your father's name?

MULLO: Ilai [PH]. Ilo [PH] they used to call him. Ilo.

LEVINE: And how about your brother's and sisters?

MULLO: Well, I had just one sister. Ephi, Ephimia [PH]. Yeah.

LEVINE: And were you the oldest, or...

MULLO: I was the oldest. Year and a half older.

LEVINE: Well, tell me what your house was like. What did your house look like?

MULLO: My house, it was a ranch. Half of the, half of the house, we make the wine, make the whiskey in the house. We had some workers to do the housework. In my house. I don't speak for the others.

LEVINE: Did you have, was your house made out of stone?

MULLO: Yes. Yes.

LEVINE: And how many rooms?

MULLO: There was four rooms. Four rooms? Yes. And lot of the others around they are, too, you know, different for the cooking, or for the storage, for, yeah.

LEVINE: Did you have water? Where did you get your water?

MULLO: Yes. The water, we had in the, in the, in the y-- yard.

LEVINE: In the yard. A pump?

MULLO: Yes, we pump it.

VOICE: Yes. Pump.

MULLO: Yeah, we pump it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MULLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And, and did you have, what did you use for light in the house?

MULLO: K -- kerosene.

LEVINE: Kerosene.

MULLO: Kerosene that time. Lot of people, they have electricity. The new homes. In that, in my time.

LEVINE: Now? Oh, but in your time?

MULLO: No. But in my time. Now, everybody, they have electricity.

LEVINE: But some people had electricity in your time?

MULLO: Yes. Some people. Some new, new, new homes. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Then what was school like for you?

MULLO: Beautiful for me. Beautiful.

LEVINE: Tell me what...

MULLO: I went in, first I went in Albania school, but I was in the first grade during the war, and after that went in Greek school. In the Greek school we had three times Albania, three times week French, and the rest of them Greek.

LEVINE: Did you, were the other classes all in Greek?

MULLO: Yes, all the class was in Greek. All the school Greek in that time. And the '22, 1922 they close the Greece.

LEVINE: Oh.

MULLO: They move because in our country the Greece in and out. You know, political.

LEVINE: Were there a lot of Greek people living in your town?

MULLO: That time. That time. They came from Greece (unintelligible) that time, but after that they left. (voices off-mic) Shh. Shh.

LEVINE: Were you a religious family?

MULLO: Yes. Yes.

LEVINE: And, and what did you do? Where...

MULLO: We used to go in church or receive, you know, all the parents. That's it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, and what, what kinds of celebrations do you remember as a child?

MULLO: Well, the Easter, the Christmas, the name days.

LEVINE: Tell me about them. What did you do?

MULLO: Oh, yes. We used to, all the relatives to come and we celebrate. In my family, my father and my grandfather, we sing all the time. You know, we get together in evening and sing and dance. Just that. Some people different, but I had a very happy family. My, my mother, she die when she was thirty-two years old. 1920.

LEVINE: So before you left.

MULLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: How old were you? You...

MULLO: (unintelligible) I was ten, eleven.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MULLO: Yeah, something like that.

LEVINE: Did you have grandparents nearby?

MULLO: I had a grandmother. My mother's mother near there. I have uncles very, very close. I used to go back and forth all the time. I was very happy.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you did for fun? What would you do for fun when you were little?

MULLO: We have fun, we sing in house when we have company, we dance, we visit the, the relatives. That's it. But they won't let us go out too much in that time. My father, he was little strict.

LEVINE: Now how was it decided that you would come to America?

MULLO: Well, my husband, my husband, he came, he, he came over here in this country in 1907. He was twelve years old. And after twenty years, he return back in Albania. He was neighborhood. We introduce, then we got marry.

LEVINE: He came back to get married? Did he come back...

MULLO: To get marry, and to, he took the parents back in United States. We came, all of them over here. 1928.

LEVINE: So he, let's see. He first came to the United States...

MULLO: 1907.

LEVINE: '07. And he stayed...

MULLO: With his father over here.

LEVINE: The whole time, until...

MULLO: All time, yes. Because the situation in Albanian, economy call it, it wasn't very good, so a lot of people, they leave the country that time.

LEVINE: So...

MULLO: And then decide to come back in 1920. They came November 14 from United States. And then we introduce, we engage -- couple, couple, one week after. Then we got marry in the January 15. You know, not too long engage.

LEVINE: And did your family know each other?

MULLO: The family very well. If you don't know the family, then the parents, they won't give it, they won't let you get marry.

LEVINE: Well, did you, what did you like about your husband?

MULLO: I like it the most because I was going to come over here.  
(she laughs)

VOICE: Come in America. (they laugh)

VOICE: Because you [not understood]

MULLO: Because my, my uncle, he was, he came from United States. He spent over here fifteen years, and he always speak about over here all the time.

LEVINE: What did they say about America?

MULLO: Oh, nice things. And no matter anybody like me there, I don't, I don't want to get marry. But my husband, he was very, very handsome, and, you know.

VOICE: [not understood]

MULLIN: Hmm?

VOICE: [not understood]

MULLIN: So I came over here, I had children.

LEVINE: What was your husband's name?

MULLO: Dimitri.

LEVINE: Dimitri.

MULLO: Dimitri.

LEVINE: And, and when you came, when you left, what did you bring with you, when you left your, your, your...

MULLO: Country?

LEVINE: ...country?

MULLO: Nothing. Just my clothes I took. That's it. (voices off-mic)

LEVINE: And then, and then, so you brought your clothes. And, and how did you go? Where did you go to take the boat?

MULLO: When went in Dura, Durazzo from Albania, from Korcë we took little plane. Four people. Four people. Then we stop in Tirana. From Tirana we sleep one night there. We went Durazzo. Durazzo we got the ferry the next day in the Bari. We stay three days in the Bari. We went in Paris. We stay one week in Paris, the four of us. From there we took the train, we went in Brindisi, in the train. Then we took the boat for the United States.

LEVINE: And where did you leave from? Do you know where left from, what city?

MULLO: Brindisi.

LEVINE: From, from...

MULLO: Brindisi, it's a, it's a - it's a French.

.

LEVINE: From Liverpool?

MULLO: I don't know. The city was Brindisi. Brindisi.

VOICE: Oh, Brindisi, Italia.

MULLO: No, no. No Italian. It was, at hat time it was French. From Paris, Brindisi. It's the port there.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay. And the name of the ship?

MULLO: Mauretania.

LEVINE: Right. And what was it like on the Mauretania?

MULLO: Beautiful.

LEVINE: How, how did you...

MULLO: I, I wasn't sick or anything. Very nice.

LEVINE: Were you down in the bottom of the ship with a lot of people...

MULLO: No, no, no. We were in second class. Second class.

LEVINE: And...

MULLO: We had one room, one top of the other.

LEVINE: Bunk beds?

MULLO: And my mother-law [sic], father-law [sic], they're another room. (VOICE)

LEVINE: And what, what about the meals? Do you remember that?

MULLO: Very good. Excellent. Excellent. Very nice.

LEVINE: Did anything happen aboard the ship, any experiences that you had...

MULLO: No, nothing. Nothing at all. Nothing.

VOICE: It's a small, eighteen years, seventeen years.

MULLO: No, nothing.

LEVINE: Do you remember when the ship came into the New York Harbor?

MULLO: Well, they, they came the, in the morning in 29 of June. And then we stay couple hours from middle of the day till about six or seven, we took the train, come in Worcester the same day.

LEVINE: Did you see the Statue of Liberty when you were on the ship?

MULLO: Oh, yes. For sure.

LEVINE: Did you know what it was?

MULLO: Yes.

LEVINE: Yes?

MULLO: Of course. I couldn't wait to come over here.

LEVINE: Yeah. And, and, and what, do you remember Ellis Island?

MULLO: Yes.

LEVINE: What do you remember about that?

MULLO: Well, I remember because we went in a office, they examine us, something, you know what I mean. And very nice area there. That's it.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about the examination or any questions...

MULLO: Oh, I, I can't remember the question or something. You know, they just saw - saw us like this. I couldn't speak English that time. I couldn't understand anyone.

LEVINE: How long did you have to stay there?

MULLO: I told you, from the morning maybe about ten o'clock. And we stay couple of hours for examine there. Then we went to New York, next.

LEVINE: And when you got to New York, then how...

MULLO: We came, I told you.

LEVINE: Go ahead.

MULLO: We took, we, we took the train. About six o'clock, something like that. Then we came over here in Worcester about one o'clock in the morning.

LEVINE: And, and do you remember the train ride. Do you remember anything about...

MULLO: I, very nice, the train. Nothing wrong. Even today it doesn't bother me wherever I go.

LEVINE: Do you remember the first few days or the first few weeks when you were here, things that struck you as very different from anything you had ever seen...

MULLO: No, because I came in a, in a house with my sister-law [sic], and all the relatives, they come greet me. I had uncle over here, a lot of cousins. I feel like home. That's it.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MULLO: We had a lot of friends in Worcester. We used to visit each other.

LEVINE: Well, how do you feel it's made a difference to you, you know, being born in Al, Albania, and then coming here as a young girl...

MULLO: Well...

LEVINE: ...and then living your life here?

MULLO: You have to get used to that. No, not, not bad at all. No, because I wasn't need to be depressed or anything. I always in the go. Relatives, friends, parties, over here, over there. In the church we meet all my, our people. Nothing wrong.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MULLO: Still then and now I feel the same. I love people.

LEVINE: Do you have children?

MULLO: Yes. I have two daughters. One of them, she born 1929, the other one, she born 1934. I had a son. He born 1936.

LEVINE: And what are their names?

MULLO: The names, my oldest daughter, she's Florence.

LEVINE: Does she have a married name?

MULLO: She, yes Pieno [PH], Pieno. And the second one, Shirley Cottili [PH]. My son, Mike Mullo. He's not marry yet.

LEVINE: And do you have grandchildren, too?

MULLO: Yes. I have seven grandchildren. And I'm great grandmother last week.

LEVINE: (laughs) Wonderful. Okay, so, what, how could you say...

MULLO: [not understood]

LEVINE: ...what part of you is Albanian, how do you say what's Albanian and what's American?

MULLO: For Albania, I like my country, you know, I like to be Al, I am Albania, but I like America, too. I become citizen soon as I could. I mix with the people. We, we all belong to, you know, Y.W.C.A. (unintelligible) We got mix. I went in the school, but maybe two, three months, but after that the children come, too, and I stop.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

MULLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what would say you're most proud of, that you...

MULLO: I'm proud because I came over here. I love the country, I love the people. That's it. My husband used to, dairy store, then we feel comfortable. I didn't suffer in my life so far.

LEVINE: How is this part of your life, now?

MULLO: Very, very good. Just I lost my husband, but he was old. And he suffer little bit. He was in a nursing home, because he was sick. That's it. Otherwise very wonderful. Thank God.

LEVINE: Okay.

MULLO: They all nice, nice children, educated, all of them. Nice grandchildren. Everything, so far. Tomorrow I don't know.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else you'd like to say about coming here before we finish?

MULLO: I'm very happy to be here. That's it. I've been twice in Albania back, visit my country, the relatives, but my home it's here.

LEVINE: Okay.

MULLO: And I'm proud of.

LEVINE: Good. Well, thank you...

MULLO: I have a lot of friends, Americans, Albanians, all kinds.

LEVINE: Do you remember much about Worcester in the early days?

MULLO: Of course.

LEVINE: Yeah. Maybe that's something we can all talk about together, what Worcester was like when you were first coming here.

MULLO: (Albanian)

LEVINE: Okay, well, I've been talking with Aphrodhiti Mullo, and you came from Albania in 1928 when you were nineteen, and this is Janet Levine. It's August 10th, 1993, and I'm signing off.

EI-372/MULLO