

EI-373

CHRISTINE (KEOTTO) POLINA GEORGE

BIRTHDATE: DECEMBER 21, 1904

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: JOHN MURIELLO, DECEMBER/1995

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

ALBANIA, 1920

AGE 16

SHIP: "THE MAYFLOWER"

PORT: MARSEILLES

RESIDENCES:

? ALBANIA: KORÇË

? US: BRIDGEPORT, CT; WORCESTER, MA

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

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: It's August 10th, 1993. I'm here with Chrisande [PH]?

GEORGE: Chrisanti [PH].

LEVINE: Chrisanti, which became Christine.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Keotto George.

GEORGE: What? Keotto? Keotto.

LEVINE: Keotto.

GEORGE: Keotto George.

LEVINE: Keotto George.

GEORGE: No, Keotto.

LEVINE: Keotto.

GEORGE: Keotto. George is my maiden, my name when I get married.

LEVINE: Yes. Okay.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: When you, and you came to the United States in 1920...

GEORGE: 1920.

LEVINE: ...you were sixteen years old...

GEORGE: Sixteen.

LEVINE: ...and you came from Albania.

GEORGE: From Albania. November 19th.

LEVINE: November 19th. Wow, you remember. (They laugh) Okay. Tell me first your birth date.

GEORGE: My birthday is 1904. December 31st, 1904. It was 1905 the next day. (she laughs)

LEVINE: December, I'm sorry, 21st, 1904? Is that what you said?

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. And what was the town or the city you were born in?

GEORGE: Korçë.

LEVINE: Korçë. Okay. Now, were you in Korçë the whole time from, until you left for the United States, till you were sixteen?

GEORGE: Yes.

LEVINE: Okay. What do you remember? When you think about Korçë, what do you think of?

GEORGE: I was young girl, and I loved Korçë, because that's all I know. I was too young to know anything else. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Do you remember where you lived? What kind of a house?

GEORGE: I live in a brick house, beautiful house, two houses I have in my father. And I live there. When I came to America I was crying. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Now, when you, in your house how many rooms did you have?

GEORGE: Well, I had --one house was four rooms and the other house was five.

LEVINE: How...

GEORGE: It was two house. Double house.

LEVINE: Oh, a double house.

GEORGE: Of my father's.

LEVINE: And how many in your family?

GEORGE: Well, there was, I live, and my mother die when I was two years old. And I used to live in my mother, my grandmother from my father.

LEVINE: What was your grandmother's name?

GEORGE: Lilo [PH]. There was all different kind then, you know. Lilo, Lilo.

LEVINE: L-I-D...

GEORGE: Lilo. Li-oh, Lilo.

LEVINE: Okay. And, and so, so you must have been quite close to your grandmother.

GEORGE: I was too much close to her.

LEVINE: Yeah.

GEORGE: Then my father, my mother, my grandmother die, my mother die when I was two years old, and I live with her. Then when my grandmother die after, you know, I was thirteen, I went to my other grandmother. It's a long story. (she laughs)

LEVINE: That's okay.

GEORGE: So, I have good life. I went to school.

LEVINE: Well, tell me first about your grandmother Lilo.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: What do you remember doing with her? What kind of experiences did you have?

GEORGE: Well, I was, I was too young, then I was going out to play. That's all I remember. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Did she, did she make you do chores around the house, or, how, was she strict?

GEORGE: Well, not with me. (she laughs)

LEVINE: No?

GEORGE: She loves me so much, because that's the one son that she has, and that's all. And she loves me like, if somebody says to me something, they hollered at me, she'd say "Don't you holler my daughter - my daughter." You know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you have brothers and sisters?

GEORGE: No. No brothers, no sister.

LEVINE: Oh, so you were the only child.

GEORGE: I was the only one. My mother die when I was two years old. So I live in one, my grandmother, then I went to my mother's...

LEVINE: Mother.

GEORGE: ...mother.

LEVINE: And what was your mother's mother's name?

GEORGE: Vassilye [PH].

LEVINE: Vassilye. And what do you remember about her?

GEORGE: She was very nice to me. She was very, very nice to me. I was spoiled from my other grandmother, so, but they fix me all right. (she laughs)

LEVINE: So...

GEORGE: You understand what I mean?

LEVINE: You were spoiled by the first grandmother?

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then the second grandmother?

GEORGE: Yeah. Second mother was a little different, a little bit higher. (she laughs)

LEVINE: What, did she, did she make you do certain kinds of chores, or did she have you do things?

GEORGE: No, I was too young to do, I was six, and I used to go to school.

LEVINE: What was school like?

GEORGE: Oh, I love it.

LEVINE: You love it?

GEORGE: I love it. I used to go to Greek school first. Then the Greek schools closed. Then the Albanian came. Then after I came to America.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you, you were there during the First World War then.

GEORGE: No.

LEVINE: In Albania?

GEORGE: I don't think so.

LEVINE: No?

GEORGE: The First World...

LEVINE: You didn't, you didn't see or here anything about the First World War when you were in Albania?

GEORGE: I don't think so. Well, the First World War was 1912.

LEVINE: Well, 1914, 19'...

GEORGE: I was over here.

LEVINE: I thought you came in 19'...

GEORGE: Oh, 1920, yeah, I know.

LEVINE: Okay, okay.

GEORGE: The first war, yes, I know. Pardon me. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah, that's okay. So, so what did you love about school?

GEORGE: I loved school. I went to school and I took French. I took, and I took Greek and Albanian. So that's all - that's all I know about school.

LEVINE: And how long did you stay in school?

GEORGE: In the old country? Till I come over here to America.

LEVINE: Till you were sixteen?

GEORGE: I was sixteen when I came over here.

LEVINE: Yeah.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: So you were in school all the time from the time you were five or six till sixteen?

GEORGE: All the time, all, all, yeah. Sixteen.

LEVINE: Was that unusual for girls to be in school so long?

GEORGE: Well, I don't know. They got to go to school. First class, seven class, you know, all kind classes.

LEVINE: Well, how were the boys treated differently than the girls?

GEORGE: Well, see, they don't go to school like they go over here, mixed up. The girls have their own school, and the boys have their own school. The Albanian. Not now, but before it was very strict. The girls got to obey and the boys got to obey what the father -- parents say. So that was all right.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you remember, was the school, did you go to school when you came over here?

GEORGE: I went to school in nighttime, because I wasn't sixteen yet. And then I went school three, three years. No, three months. My father was strict with me. And he used to come in school the nighttime and pick me up there. I was kind of shy. So I quit. But I wish I wasn't quit, because it was good. (she laughs)

LEVINE: What was your father like?

GEORGE: My father was very good. But I didn't see my father, I saw the first time when I came to America.

LEVINE: Oh. I see. So, what was your father's name?

GEORGE: Vanni [PH].

LEVINE: Vanni?

GEORGE: Vanni.

LEVINE: And so did you have aunts and uncles, or was it just your grandmothers that you...

GEORGE: No, my grandmother. My father was all the only boy. And me, I was the only girl, and my mother die, and nothing.

LEVINE: Did your mother have sisters and brothers?

GEORGE: My mother's, yeah. My mother had sisters and brothers.

LEVINE: So did you know them when you were in Albania?

GEORGE: Of course. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah? Did you spend time with them?

GEORGE: Many times.

LEVINE: What do you remember? Do you remember any times with them, any things that happened?

GEORGE: I don't know.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, for example, do you remember any customs that you, that you observed, or that you did when you were in Albania?

GEORGE: Well they have a lot of religious thing. They have a lot of, all kind of things, you know. They have big parties. They have everything. I don't remember anything else.

LEVINE: Do you remember any weddings? What were weddings like?

GEORGE: Oh, big, big weddings.

LEVINE: Yeah, what did they do that was different from here?

GEORGE: Oh, there was a lot of different from here. The weddings down there, they start one week, from Monday to Sunday.

LEVINE: And what happens all during the week?

GEORGE: They're going all the time. And they talking -- they're dancing, they're singing, they're talking, they give presents.

GEORGE: Cooking. All kind of cooking. (she laughs) Yeah.

LEVINE: And, and were there any kind of rituals about the bride and the groom and what they did?

GEORGE: The bride and the groom, just like over here, but a little different.

LEVINE: How?

GEORGE: Well, they was more shy. You know, the bride and the groom, they're more shy. They don't...

LEVINE: Now was there a dowry involved?

GEORGE: Huh?

LEVINE: Was, was there a dowry...

LEVINE: ...for the bride?

VOICE: Sure. Priga [PH].

GEORGE: Huh?

VOICE: Priga.

GEORGE: Oh, yeah. Very much. The people, they...

LEVINE: Tell me about that.

GEORGE: The people, they use to sell houses. They used to sell things to have money to give to the groom, to get him married to the daughter. But now not no more. (she laughs) They change very much.

LEVINE: Yeah. So, let's see. When the bride and groom got married...

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...now did they go and live in another house, or did they live with their...

GEORGE: Oh, no. That time they're living in the same house?

LEVINE: With who?

VOICE: The mother-in-law.

GEORGE: The mother-in-law.

LEVINE: The mother-in-law of the bride?

GEORGE: Oh, yeah. Yeah. The mother-in-law of the bride, yes. Very strict. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: And, let's see. So you were married when you were over here.

GEORGE: Yeah, three years after. I came in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I - [aside] please! -- I came in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

LEVINE: Say it again?

GEORGE: I came in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

LEVINE: Yeah, well, first tell me, when you left Albania, do you remember what you took with you? Did you take any valuable things to come here?

GEORGE: I don't think, I don't think so.

LEVINE: No.

GEORGE: Jewelry I think what I have.

VOICE: [not understood]

GEORGE: Nothing, you know, too small to notice those things. I have (unintelligible).

LEVINE: And did you, how was it arranged for you to come?

GEORGE: Well, my father was here.

LEVINE: And did he send you a ticket?

GEORGE: He sent me a ticket, and he come, and he waited for me down in Bridgeport, down in Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Oh, okay.

GEORGE: In the boat.

LEVINE: Well, first tell me, where did you go to catch the ship? Where did you leave from?

GEORGE: Well, on those days there was quarantine, and you went to France, Bordeaux. And you stay two weeks in France. But I used to speak French, so that's all right. That time the boat got fixed.

LEVINE: Oh, the boat got fixed.

GEORGE: You take the boat after, and you come, after two weeks you come over here to America.

LEVINE: What was the name of the boat?

GEORGE: Flower, Flower, I forget now. (she laughs) I had it in my mind, but I forgot.

LEVINE: And where did it leave from, the port?

GEORGE: They come to Marseilles. Marseilles.

LEVINE: Marseilles.

GEORGE: Flower? I can't remember now. I know it's Flower.

LEVINE: Flower.

GEORGE: It doesn't come no more afterwards.

LEVINE: That was the last time?

GEORGE: That was the last time they came.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: Yeah. It some over here, it's some, you see some buses with the name.

LEVINE: Okay, well, if you think of it.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: So what kind of accommodations did you have on the ship? Do you remember?

GEORGE: I don't remember. There was, I was on the second class, and there was two of those, two of those beds...

LEVINE: Bunk beds.

GEORGE: ...one top and one bottom. And there were two...

LEVINE: And you were travelling alone?

GEORGE: Alone, yeah. But I have somebody, some man take me over. Man and wife came. So they took me over. Yeah.

LEVINE: Now did they stay in the same cabin?

GEORGE: They stay in same cabin, yeah. They were man and wife.

LEVINE: Did you know them?

GEORGE: Well, I know them, but they're both dead now.

LEVINE: But I mean before you left did you know...

GEORGE: Oh. I don't know them, but after, you know, they told me that they going, so they took me over. Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. How did you feel about coming here?

GEORGE: Well, I was so glad that I was going to see my father. But it's like I never know my father. (she laughs) And I feel all right. I come over here, and I like it, and I went to Bridgeport, and he bring me one of those houses. And I says, "Where's America?" (she laughs)

LEVINE: Well, tell me, well, tell about when you, the ship, the ship came into New York.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember seeing New York and the Statue of Liberty?

GEORGE: I remember I see New York, and I remember I see the Statue of Liberty. There was after when I came, there was quarantine New York in bus, too. So I got to stay about a week in bus. May, May, Mayflower.

LEVINE: Mayflower.

GEORGE: The bus was Mayflower.

LEVINE: The boat.

GEORGE: The boat.

LEVINE: Mayflower. And, and did you, you had to stay on the boat in quarantine.

GEORGE: Yeah. One week. There was quarantine, or something sickness. And my father, I remember he put on a soldier suit, army suit, to come to see me. And I didn't go to meet to him, because I was, I don't know him. (she laughs) It's a long story, right?

LEVINE: Do you remember what they were quarantined for? What sickness?

GEORGE: Nothing, nothing, nothing serious, but I don't know. They were slow. They were supposed to stay.

LEVINE: And how long did you have to stay on Ellis Island?

GEORGE: Stay on the boat two weeks, one week.

LEVINE: And Ellis Island?

GEORGE: Ellis Island, yes.

LEVINE: How long?

GEORGE: I don't know.

LEVINE: One day?

GEORGE: Oh, to take, for examination. Yeah, they exam us, then they let us go. Then we take the train and we come to Bridgeport, Connecticut.

LEVINE: Did you, do you remember anything about Ellis Island?

GEORGE: Oh, I don't remember anything, I know it's --

LEVINE: But when did you meet your father? What did...

GEORGE: I, I meet him in a boat. I told you he was dressed up in a army suit, because they would let nobody get in the boat.

LEVINE: Oh.

GEORGE: So he came to the boat to see me.

LEVINE: Yeah.

GEORGE: So I meet him down there. But I don't know, you know. He says, "I'm your father." but he's says, I don't know. (she laughs)

LEVINE: I see. So then you, you left the boat, left Ellis Island...

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...and you went to...

GEORGE: Took the train.

LEVINE: ...train.

GEORGE: And come then to Bridgeport.

LEVINE: To Bridgeport.

GEORGE: But when I went to Bridgeport, I didn't like it. The house. I says, "Oh." (she laughs)

LEVINE: What didn't you like?

GEORGE: There was small, you know, it was a wooden house, and small house, and I don't know. (unintelligible) But now I like it. (she laughs)

LEVINE: So, so you were in Bridgeport, and your father was there with you.

GEORGE: Of course.

LEVINE: Yeah. And what did you do, do you remember anything that struck you as real different about this country besides the houses?

GEORGE: I saw the country, but, you know, as I say it was different too much from now, now and then.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: It was nothing. Just like there you used to go with small cars, you know, the horses and things like this. They didn't have no hot water. They didn't have nothing, you know. They have the bathroom, pardon me, in a hole, you know, and everybody goes there. There was the two toilets and there was another apartment. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Was, was where you lived worse than where you, than the house where you were in Albania?

GEORGE: Oh, no, the Albanian house was good.

LEVINE: Was good.

GEORGE: Very good.

LEVINE: And this house was not as good.

GEORGE: No. That's what I says, I want to go, I want to go to America. He says, my father says, "This is America." (she laughs)

LEVINE: So, so what did you do? Did you, did you look for a job, or did, what did...

GEORGE: No, my father won't let me look for job or anything. He was ascare. You know they were strict, like the, the Albanian. He won't leave me go to work. And he won't leave me go to school. But I went to school. And I told him (unintelligible) and he was waiting for me, you know, and I was ashamed. And I come, I went one week, and I didn't go, which I'm sorry now, but it's gone.

LEVINE: This was at night?

GEORGE: At night, yeah.

LEVINE: Now, what was your father doing for work here?

GEORGE: He was a baker.

LEVINE: And...

GEORGE: He was working for some baker.

LEVINE: He was working for a baker?

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. What was it like being around with your father after you didn't even know him?

GEORGE: Well, what can I do? I used to like it, and I get used to it. After, it's all right.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: What kind of a man was he?

GEORGE: He was good man. Very good man. Very good man. It's the only daughter he has, no, no, no other, no brothers, no sister, so.

LEVINE: How did he treat you?

GEORGE: Treat me very well. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah.

GEORGE: Treat me well. He spoil me. (voice off-mic) Huh? Yeah.

LEVINE: So, okay, so after you were here a while, and you didn't stay in school, then...

GEORGE: No, I didn't stay in school.

LEVINE: ...what did you do at, like, in the daytime?

GEORGE: Well, then after, everybody says to my hus-- my father, he says, please, leave the girl go out, you know, at least to go to work or something. Then I went to work down in Bridgeport, that's an electric. They call it Brine [PH]. Electric. Brine. Then I went down there, and I worked for a while. Then he took my pay and he give me a quarter to go to show. (she laughs)

LEVINE: He took your pay?

GEORGE: Yeah. Well, I don't know what to do with money. So he give me quarter to go to show. (she laughs)

LEVINE: So, so did you work long at the Brine electric?

GEORGE: Yeah, I work for a while, yeah. About two years or six days...

LEVINE: And did you like that?

GEORGE: I do. I loved it. I was mixed with people anyways. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah. Was this like a factory, assembling...

GEORGE: Yeah, it's a factory.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: Yeah. Factory.

LEVINE: And then when did you meet your husband?

GEORGE: Well, see, I came over here, you know, I had aunt over here. And she have baby boy. So I came with my father on the train, and (unintelligible) she went in hospital there, come to take care of that boy. And then we're going to go to Bridgeport, again with my father. And the train, it's happened that the train went by. So there was a friend of my father. And he says, let's go see him. There was a meeting near the train. The house was near the train. (unintelligible) went down there to see the, to see them people. It happened that my husband was there visiting. And I was going to make coffee. (she laughs) Story. And I don't know, they were saying something, you know, they do like this and a sparkle with the gas, and the gas lights. (she gestures)

So I was trying to do it like this, but I can't do it. And I start to be shy. He says, "Don't be shy," he says, my husband, he says, "but a big girl like you," he says, "you don't know how to light the gas." It was conversation like this, you know. Later he says to me, my father says, "You better get, go, send this girl to the school for me." Says go

to school. And my father says, "No," he says, "I want, I want my daughter to get married." (she laughs) And this and that, and then everything was like this, and he says, "Well, that's the boy over here." My fa, my husband was there. And my father says, "Do you like that man?" I says, "Well, I don't know." Something like this. And it was all over. That's where I meet my husband. But he's a good man. (she laughs) Very good man.

LEVINE: What was your husband's name?

GEORGE: Christopher George.

LEVINE: Christopher George.

GEORGE: He was on my (unintelligible).

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So once you met him, then did you get married right away, or did...

GEORGE: No, three months.

LEVINE: Three months. Did you, did he court you? Did he take you...

GEORGE: Oh, yeah. He court me very much. He used to come from, I used to come from Bridgeport, and he used to come to, to Bridgeport, my husband. He court me for three months, then I was married 1920, 1923. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Now was your wedding here in America, was it...

GEORGE: No, here.

LEVINE: Was it anything like the weddings in Albania?

GEORGE: Well, no. The weddings over here, they're better now. (she laughs)

LEVINE: It was a shorter, it wasn't a, for a whole week.

GEORGE: Oh, it was a big, big, big wedding.

LEVINE: Oh, it was a big wedding.

GEORGE: Come on, listen to my story. (. . .)

VOICE: He married you.

GEORGE: (laughs) Yeah

LEVINE: So, so it was a very big wedding?

GEORGE: Very big wedding. Yeah.

LEVINE: And it was in Bridgeport?

GEORGE: No, (unintelligible), in Worcester.

LEVINE: In Worcester.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now how did you happen to get to Worcester?

GEORGE: Well, I came over here, I had aunts over here. And I came to my aunt's, and my wedding was over my aunt's house.

LEVINE: I see.

GEORGE: Yeah. Then after went honeymoon, and get married, went the honeymoon, and I went...

LEVINE: Where did you go?

GEORGE: I went to my home. We got a house before I was married.

LEVINE: You had a house?

GEORGE: Oh, of course, I have a house and all the furniture and everything.

LEVINE: Wow. Did your father have to give a dowry, do you know?

GEORGE: My father used to come live with me. (voice off-mic) Huh?

LEVINE: In this country?

GEORGE: (voice off-mic) Oh, no. Dowry, no. No, no.

LEVINE: Not in this country.

GEORGE: No, no, no. Not, even in the old country now they don't, they don't give no dowry.

LEVINE: So, so you, you moved into your own house with furniture and everything.

GEORGE: Yeah, everything, yeah.

LEVINE: What was your husband doing for work?

GEORGE: He was a tailor.

LEVINE: A tailor.

GEORGE: And politician, too.

LEVINE: And a politician?

GEORGE: Very much politician.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. In Worcester?

GEORGE: In Worcester, yeah.

LEVINE: So, then did you work anymore after you got married?

GEORGE: No. Afterward, when the kids got, went to high school. I have two boys. I had a girl, but she died when she was small. The first one. 1924. Then I, the others, you know, then I take care of my boys.

LEVINE: What...

GEORGE: When they went to high school, then I went to work.

LEVINE: What were...

GEORGE: There was Depression that time, too.

LEVINE: What were your boy, what are your boy's names?

GEORGE: George and one Mike. Yeah.

LEVINE: And then when they grew up you went back to work? And what did you do...

GEORGE: When they, when they went to high school.

LEVINE: When they went to high school.

GEORGE: I remember there was a big depression. There was not too much. So I went there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: And then after one got marry, and the other one got marry.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now you have grandchildren?

GEORGE: I have grandchildren and I have great grandchildren. (she laughs) Is my story all right?

LEVINE: It's wonderful.

GEORGE: You understand everything?

LEVINE: Yeah, I do. Tell me, tell me...

GEORGE: But nothing like America. I went to the old, to the old country once, and, all the group, seventeen, with the society, Albania.

LEVINE: Oh, Albanian society from here went to visit?

GEORGE: Yeah. Went, seventeen. And, but, there was nothing (unintelligible) still want to go, come to America. (voice off-mic) But it's all right. But now in Albania not so good.

LEVINE: Not so good.

GEORGE: Not so good.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, what makes you proud about what you've achieved in your life, what you've done in your life?

GEORGE: What I proud? I don't know. I'm proud that Amer-- that I'm here. Proud that I have a good life. I had good husband, I have good children. I educate them. One is engineering, one is, got nice work, but don't get so good now, but got nice work. So I'm proud of them. That's all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how, how do you like this time in your life?

GEORGE: Well, it's all right. Like, not like it used to before. It will change. America change, too.

LEVINE: Tell me about some of the changes that you lived through in this country. Can you, it's kind of big question, but what's changed a lot over your lifetime?

GEORGE: Well, now, like the, the children, pardon me, in this country. They get a little bit old, they go away. They don't live with their parents. That's not nice. Our children, they get marry, then they go. But it's change all over now.

LEVINE: Yeah.

GEORGE: Right?

LEVINE: Yeah.

GEORGE: That's all. (voice off-mic) Huh?

LEVINE: In Albania they stay together...

GEORGE: Not, not now. She says not now. (voice off-mic) But they stay more than they stay over here, you know. Over here I know they get sixteen, my kids don't go. They stay home until they marry, but I mean, this...

LEVINE: Do you, do you notice any big changes in Worcester from when you first came here. What Worcester was like as a town, and now?

GEORGE: I don't know. I don't know. I don't that much change. For me now when I get old, everything gets changed for me anyways. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Well, tell me about your husband. Was he a politician in Worcester?

GEORGE: He was. Yes.

LEVINE: What did he, what did he, did he run for office?

GEORGE: He ran for office. He was president so many Albanian societies, and everything, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: Yeah.

LEVINE: So you've stayed within the Albanian society here?

GEORGE: Yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: And the church?

GEORGE: And the church. (voice off-mic) Yeah. Fifty five, you now. and the made the church, not this church over here. The first church, they used to go house to house, and they want to collect them, that they have a church for the Albanians. They didn't have no church for the Albanian. So the people, the poor people, they go under their beds because they didn't have no money to give to him. So he, he work hard. He work hard in everything.

LEVINE: He worked hard to get money for the church?

GEORGE: Yeah, for the church. Yeah, yeah. He was so proud that he was Albanian. They worked for the Albanian to make it good. And it was very good, so they put on, they -- all rights, you know, but afterward, you know, they went down again.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GEORGE: But he wants to, he was very good for the people, for this country, for everything, you know.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else, are there any customs that you keep, that you had in Albania that you still do today, or did before...

GEORGE: Well, in among the, in among the Albanians they do it. But.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you...

GEORGE: Like the name days, there used to be name days. They used to have big parties. They used to be all kind of things, you know. Now they don't do those things. Among the Albanians they do them, but not like they used to do before. (voices off-mic)

LEVINE: So is there anything else that you can think of to say about being Albanian or being American...

GEORGE: I'm proud I'm Albanian. I'm so proud I'm Albanian.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What makes you so proud of being Albanian?

GEORGE: Well, because it's -- I born Albanian, and I want to die Albanian. (voice off-mic) I'm proud of it. Even now they're doing so bad, but still that's good.

LEVINE: Yeah.

GEORGE: Sometime they going to be all right. They used to be, Albania used to be so beautiful, you know. Now when I went, the last time that I went Albanian changed a lot. And I see it like this, I says, "Oh, my gosh." They didn't even have electricity, they didn't have nothing down there. Now they have electricity, they have everything, you know. Now again the Albania went down. But they going to be all right. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Okay, well, I want to thank you very much.

GEORGE: Thank you very much, too.

LEVINE: Very interesting...

GEORGE: And if I say something wrong, you know. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Nothing's wrong. There's no wrong. Everything's fine.

GEORGE: Yeah

LEVINE: I've been speaking with Christine George here in Worcester...

GEORGE: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: ...August 10th, 1993, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service signing off.

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