

EI-376
ELEFTERIA GIANTRIS
BIRTHDATE: MAY 1, 1915
INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 10, 1993
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 78
RUNNING TIME: 9:45
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.
RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.
INTERVIEW LOCATION: WORCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

ALBANIA, 1936
AGE: 19

SHIP:
PORT:
RESIDENCES:

Historian's Note: Other ladies are present and comment from time to time.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. It's August 10th, 1993. I'm here at the Allyrian Gardens home in Worchester, and in Worchester, Massachusetts. I'm about to speak with Elefteria Giantris, who came from Albania in 1936 when she was 19 years old. Well, I'm very happy to get to talk to you.

GIANTRIS: Nice to talking to you too.

LEVINE: And I want to hear what you have to tell about your experience coming through Ellis Island.

GIANTRIS: I try.

LEVINE: Okay.

GIANTRIS: [laughs]

LEVINE: Tell me first your birth date.

GIANTRIS: I'm born 1915.

LEVINE: And the day?

GIANTRIS: May 1st.

LEVINE: And where were you born?

GIANTRIS: Lubona [PH]. [laughs] It's—it's a town, Lubona.

LEVINE: Lubona?

GIANTRIS: Yeah, because a town.

LEVINE: Can you—could you spell it?

GIANTRIS: It's—[unclear]

LEVINE: L-O-B-N-O—

LEVINE: O-N-I—

GIANTRIS: [unclear], right.

LEVINE: Okay. That's good. We'll have it. Okay. And did you live in Lubona the total time?

GIANTRIS: I—I came the Kolta [ph]—I was nine years.

LEVINE: Okay. So until you were nine, you were in Lubona.

GIANTRIS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then you went—

GIANTRIS: Yeah, because my mother pass away.

LEVINE: I see. What did your mother die of?

GIANTRIS: Cancer. Cancer.

LEVINE: And do you remember your life in Lubona before you left? Do you—

GIANTRIS: I used to—I used to go bring—you know, pick wheat out. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Pick the wheat from the chaff? Separate it? Uh-huh. And was Lubona an agricultural town?

GIANTRIS: Yeah, that's a town.

LEVINE: Farming?

GIANTRIS: Town. Yeah, just like any small town.

LEVINE: It was a farming town?

GIANTRIS: Farming town.

GIANTRIS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what did—what was grown there besides wheat?

GIANTRIS: Well, vegetables.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GIANTRIS: You know, prunes and this and, you know, pears and [unclear]
- wheat, the wheat, corn -everything.

LEVINE: Was Lubona—is it in the south of Albania?

GIANTRIS: I think so. I think so.

GIANTRIS: Yeah. It is from Kolta is around six hours different.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Tell me about, like do you remember mark-market
days when people would come with their—with their vegetables and sell
them?

GIANTRIS: Over there, you could make your own.

LEVINE: You grew your own vegetables—

GIANTRIS: Over there.

LEVINE: —for your own family.

GIANTRIS: Everything. Everything that you do on your own.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about your father? What was his name?

GIANTRIS: Joseph.

LEVINE: Joseph. And what did he do for work?

GIANTRIS: He used to put a tin in the house, in the [unclear]—what you
call-cover the house.

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GIANTRIS: Roof.

LEVINE: Oh—

GIANTRIS: tin - tin roof.

LEVINE: He—he was a roofer.

GIANTRIS: Roofer. A roofer.

LEVINE: And did you have brothers and sisters?

GIANTRIS: Yeah, had—had two brothers—three brothers and two sisters.

LEVINE: Oh. And your mother, what was her name?

GIANTRIS: Thomieda [PH].

LEVINE: Mieda?

GIANTRIS: Thomieda.

LEVINE: Thomieda.

LEVINE: And—and do you remember her maiden name? Her name be—

GIANTRIS: No.

LEVINE: —fore she married?

GIANTRIS: I didn't know my mother's—mother's name at all because she left me, you know, seven years old. And I don't have my sister—left my sister, four years old. And my brothers were—the three was older than me. Was—15 is the oldest child. But I remember just like today.

LEVINE: Yeah.

GIANTRIS: My mother.

LEVINE: Were you closest to anybody in your family? Who were you—

GIANTRIS: Very close all my family.

LEVINE: Oh, you were?

GIANTRIS: My children, my husband, my grandchildren. So close you can't—you don't believe it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And when you were—

GIANTRIS: Yeah.

LEVINE: —growing up with your brothers and sisters—

GIANTRIS: Parents. Yeah.

LEVINE: You went eight times—

GIANTRIS: [unclear]

LEVINE: —to Albania?

GIANTRIS: Albania.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. You have brothers and sisters there?

GIANTRIS: Over there, yeah. And I have two brothers pass away. Two brothers [unclear] my father pass away. I left from there; he pass away too. And they start a war after, in 1939, [unclear] door is closed and they can't get in. And I went and 32 years after [unclear], I went.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, what were your brothers' and sisters' names?

GIANTRIS: Tomas [PH], Kotzi [PH] and [unclear], Thomieda, and after my father was married for a second time, he's got a child, Valentina.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GIANTRIS: A lovely girl. [unclear].

LEVINE: Do you—did you go to school when—when you were in—

GIANTRIS: [unclear]

LEVINE: [unclear]

GIANTRIS: [unclear] La kolt-- [ph]

LEVINE: No—oh, before that you didn't go? No.

GIANTRIS: No.

LEVINE: Do you remember the house you lived in?

GIANTRIS: [unclear]—in Lubona? Yes, the water got in front of my house. It's like a [chuckles]—like a—like a—also, [unclear] like a—

LEVINE: A canal?

GIANTRIS: A canal, a little—yeah. I—I remember everything. You can remember things more you were small and [unclear] today and tomorrow.

LEVINE: Yes.

GIANTRIS: [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GIANTRIS: You remember.

LEVINE: So—So—Sovernia [PH]—were you—did you—a canal went past your house.

GIANTRIS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was one-family house?

GIANTRIS: One family.

LEVINE: And it was just your family in there?

GIANTRIS: Yeah. Well, the other house too after us.

LEVINE: But was—

GIANTRIS: It was a small canal.

LEVINE: And it was—

GIANTRIS: Small one.

LEVINE: The houses were attached? No.

GIANTRIS: Single.

LEVINE: Single.

GIANTRIS: Yeah, all separated.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

GIANTRIS: Each other.

LEVINE: And—

GIANTRIS: It was beautiful.

LEVINE: It—and tell me more about the town. What did it look like?

GIANTRIS: It's a small, not too many people. And everybody working very hard to make a living, to make the—the wheat, the corn, the vegetables, the—the meat, you know. It—just like—the chickens and—

GIANTRIS: —the [unclear]. That's all. And the chickens, make the butter already for the winter and the ch—the cheese and the—everything. We have to get ready for winter, for woods and like that. Well, the—the most of the wood, the men used to go -- not [unclear] woman, they got the other job to be done.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, what—how were you treated differently from the boys in your family, being a girl?

GIANTRIS: Well, to go—to go pick up wood was the boys' job.

LEVINE: And what were the girls' jobs?

GIANTRIS: To cook and inside. [laughs] And we go—if you go in the field, the wheat field or cornfield, like that, woman is going too. Girls going too. Mens going too, working together.

GIANTRIS: Yeah, yeah. Well, just the boys go in the mountain, get the wood home.

GIANTRIS: Yeah.

LEVINE: What kind of a stove did you—did your mother have?

GIANTRIS: Wood stove. Wood stove.

LEVINE: That is for cooking?

GIANTRIS: For cooking.

LEVINE: And do you remember—did you have—did your mother—what—how did she wash clothes?

GIANTRIS: Well, warmin' the water on top of the unclear] put the pan on top, and put water. They warm it with a fire with the wood underneath and wash clothes. And you have to go in the river for the river wash the—

GIANTRIS: The blankets - the girls [unclear] wash the blanket in the river.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was it a pretty town?

GIANTRIS: Was small. That's very pretty because that's—that's—that's your own. You grew—you born there. You're growing up there.

LEVINE: Yeah.

GIANTRIS: And you love 'em.

LEVINE: Did you—did you have a church in the town?

GIANTRIS: Yes.

LEVINE: Was your—was your family religious?

GIANTRIS: Yes. Today, too. My grandchildren and everything are relig—very religious.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember any of the ceremonies?

GIANTRIS: [sentence unclear]

LEVINE: Wait. I'll stop this for a min—

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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