

EI-435

MARGARET WILSON COOK

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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SCOTLAND, 1920

AGE 9

SHIP: "THE COLUMBIA"

PORT: GLASCOW

RESIDENCES:

SCOTLAND: DUNS; CHIRNSIDE

US: RUMFORD, MAINE; POTSDAM, NY; MIAMI, FL

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. I'm here today in Fort Pierce, Florida at the home of Mrs. Margaret Cook. Mrs. Cook came from Scotland when she was nine years old...

COOK: Hmm-hmm.

LEVINE: ...in 1920. Came through Ellis Island and went on to Maine at first.

COOK: Hmm-hmm. That's right.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I'm very happy to be here regardless of which day. (she laughs) And I'm really looking forward to hearing your...

COOK: Oh.

LEVINE: ...your story.

COOK: Thank you for coming. I hope I can do it accurately. If it's, if there's a flaw you wouldn't know it anyway. No one else probably would so far back. (she laughs)

LEVINE: That's right.

COOK: After all, it's a long time ago.

LEVINE: So whatever you remember, it would be wonderful to have it down on tape. Okay, let's start with your birth date and the place where you were born.

COOK: Interesting - my father bor-- now, this is interesting. My father was a game keeper in the old country. A game keeper has charge of the

outlying districts. The manager would have the inside, and the gamekeeper has charge of the outlying area. My, that's what my father did. And he had, always had a gun on his shoulder. And he had a glass eye because he ran into something, put his eye out in the woods. He died when I was two.

LEVINE: Oh. What was your father's name?

COOK: James Wilson. My mother was Janet White Wilson.

LEVINE: What do you, do you, do you have any memories of your father at all?

COOK: None. None. I was too young when he died. And my mother had a child after he died. And that was my little brother, Jim. And that tore me to pieces to have to leave him at home, because he was mine. My mother always left me in charge of my little brother. She worked in the, something to do with the war, because we were at war. First World War. I don't know what it was whether she - I - I -- had plates. I don't know what it was whether she - I -- I always said my mother made shells, but I'm sure it wasn't that. But it was something to do with the war effort. And she always just grabbed her shawl off a hook, put it around her and went out very early in the morning. And I was always up in time to have tea with her before she left. Tea and a piece of bread and butter. That was all she ever ate. And then she came home at nine and got my brother out of bed, because nobody else could do anything for him. He was just a baby, practically. That so far is what I remember of my mother.

LEVINE: Now, you, you and your brother were the, the only two children in the family?

COOK: The only two children. Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And did you have grandparents?

COOK: Yes, I had grandmother - was -- they were my mother's. And my grandmother was my mother's step-mother, as her father had went and left with three children. And he remarried. So this was his second marriage, my grandfather. And she was the grannie that I knew. I never knew my mother's own mother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember the name of your grandmother, the one you knew?

COOK: No, I don't. She was a Haye. She, my grandfather was Haye, John Haye.

LEVINE: Do you remember your grandfather?

COOK: Yes, I do. My grandfather was John Haye.

LEVINE: Do you, do, can you remember any experiences with your grandfather when you were a little girl?

COOK: Yes. My grandfather was a very, very nice, kind man. He always had sweeties in his pocket. And my little brother and I would always go to my grandfather and start fishing in his pocket. And we had little white, shiny-finished peppermint. It was called a pan drop. And no matter if it, mine had tobacco or something in it, you know. (she chuckles) But we always went for those, and he, that's what he wanted, you know, for us to come to him and fish in his pocket for pan drops. He was a very kind man. And he was still living when I went home to Scotland for the first time, which was, I'm not sure what, just when, what date it was. But it was just before I got married.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: Because my husband said, "You'd better go before we're married, because I'm sure it'll be very, a long time before you can get back afterwards."

LEVINE: What, did, did your grandfather work when you were a little girl?

COOK: Yes. My grandfather was a machine tender in a paper mill. The Scots were all paper makers, and that's why they went to Maine. Because the turbulence, rivers in Maine created water power. And they built tremendous number of paper mills. And they all, friends of my grandfather's and other people, of course, many went to America where they could make big money. That's all they cared about was money. Money.

LEVINE: How about your grandmother? Do you remember any experiences with Grannie?

COOK: Well, she, of course, was my step-, my mother's step-mother.

LEVINE: Right.

COOK: And she was a provider. She was a very capable woman. And she always got a share of their, the older children's money, earnings, which she banked for them. And when they married they got it back, or when they went into business she had money for them. She was a provider. A very smart bunch of people, all of them. My Aunt Min, who lived at home, was the youngest daughter. I saw her die, at ninety. Not this trip home, but the one before that. She was ninety years old and she didn't even know me. She just lay there. And then she died. She was a, besides being a seamstress, she had a tremendous voice. And she was always in demand to take part in local things, going, you know. And Edinburgh was the center for a big musical affair. Edinburgh is the capitol of Scotland, and everybody knows Edinburgh. She...

LEVINE: Where were you born? Were you living in Edinburgh?

COOK: No, no. I was born where my father was the gamekeeper. I was born there. That was, I was born in Nisbet. I...

LEVINE: N-E-S-B-I-T-T?

COOK: No, I think it's N-, I think it's N-I-S-B-E-T. That's the way I spell it. It's pronounced that way. Nisbet. It was a big farm. I could show you pictures. I should have gotten them out. But they, the old country they built big farms, built houses. And they'd have, start with a little one, then build an end on it, and another end on it, and you'd wonder why they needed so much, you know, living space.

LEVINE: Were they made out of stone?

COOK: Stone, yes. Hmm-hmm.

LEVINE: Do you remember the place where you lived?

COOK: The place I lived in was in Chirnside. And that was where my grandfather and grandmother lived. And after my father died my mother moved back to Chirnside to be next, near home, near her father. With a new baby. She had a baby just after he died. And so there was Jim. That was Jim. Jim and I and my mother moved to Chirnside. And it wasn't exactly where they lived, where the grandparents lived, because they lived in the mill cottages. It was maybe a mile or two away.

LEVINE: So these were cottages for people who worked in the paper mill?

COOK: In the mill. Uh-huh. And they were called the station cottages because the railroad station was close by. And that, it was wonderful. We, we could go anywhere for a couple pennies, you know, on the train. And she had sisters and brothers around. Which, she had her, the sister that, Meg, my Aunt Meg, she named me after her. Nobody ever called me Meg. It was always Maggie or something else uninteresting. (they laugh) But I was named for my Aunt Meg.

LEVINE: I'm going to close this door, just because I can hear...

COOK: Is that bothering you?

LEVINE: ...I can hear the after shower, and I want the tape to be...

COOK: Okay.

LEVINE: So when you were living with your mother and your baby brother, Jim...

COOK: That was in...

LEVINE: ...in Chirnside?

COOK: No, that was in Duns. And that's D-U-N-S. It was, I always said I was born at Nisbet, which was the house of the, the name of the house. Nisbet House.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: Nisbet House, where I was born.

LEVINE: Was that typical that houses had names?

COOK: Yes, I would say it was. Uh-huh. I know because my, when I went home one time, I went home several times, every time I could squeeze the money together. I didn't, I had a very unhappy place in America. My uncle and aunt that I lived with were, "Money, money, money, money." You know, that's all they cared about.

LEVINE: Yeah. I want to talk about them. Let's talk about while you were still in Scotland at first. I'm not clear on something. Chirnside is where your grandparents lived?

COOK: Yeah, Chirnside was their home, where the station cottages were and the paper mill was, and the easy access to other places at the station for tuppence. You know what tuppence is?

LEVINE: Hmm-hmm. And, and you lived in Duns which was not too far away?

COOK: Not far away, no.

LEVINE: And it was you and your mother and your brother?

COOK: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And your Aunt Min? Did she live there...

COOK: No, my Aunt Min lived in the second home I had with my grandparents. She lived at home. She was actually a dress maker, or a tailor we call it. Because it seems like everything she made she made down from somebody else's things. She was a very, she did her training, you know, how they did it in the old country and...

LEVINE: How, how did she do her training?

COOK: They trained, they served time. What was it called?

LEVINE: Apprenticeship?

COOK: Apprentice. She was apprentice to a tailor. And she could do anything. Give her, for instance, my Uncle Johnny who was in France, France fighting, and came home frequently just across the, you know, the water, the, what do you call it? The...

LEVINE: The Channel?

COOK: Channel. Just across the Channel. And he always came with a bag of sweeties for us, and, to my, to my mother. Always came to see my mother. And that was in Chirnside. But Uncle Johnny was the youngest in the family. I think she had four. After she married my grandfather who had four, and she had one when she married him. My Aunt Min. No, no.

My Aunt Min was the youngest. No. This one died in Canada, anyway. That was her daughter.

LEVINE: So your mother was, was working on the war effort?

COOK: Yeah, whatever she was doing, I always said she made shells, but I'm sure she didn't because the place where they were doing this thing that they were doing was formerly a machine shop of, and the only thing I remember is the young people in the area could rent bicycles down there. It, almost like a garage, only they didn't have (unintelligible). They had motors of some kind. Do you ever, do you remember Jimmy Clark? Jimmy Clark was an automobile racer who died in one of those races in France. Jim Clark. Jim Clark got his training of motors. And that's why I remember it. He learned about motors, and that's how he became a speed racer. But he was famous. And that was at the top of the street where I lived, is a motor with Jim Clark's memento, or memorial. (she chuckles)

LEVINE: Oh. Now, so, can you describe the living quarters where you lived?

COOK: Well, they were meager, I can tell you. We had no indoor plumbing. None. Now, this was war. We had dark curtains on the window. Never showed any light at night. We had lamps to read by or whatever we did. But there was never much for time for that. There was a big room that you walked into with a little tiny hall. What do you call it that comes in off...

LEVINE: A foyer? A foyer?

COOK: ...comes in from the street? Uh-huh. And then there's another door. There's a door coming in from the street. There was a stair that went up there, up the, that's where my father's things were. Birds that he'd shot and had mounted and things. In those days there were a lot of big birds. Did you happen to see the show on television the other night that showed the hunting, you know, big birds that they hunted in Britain, at that time in the forest in the northern part? Well, my father had those things. And he had guns around. And...

LEVINE: Was that considered a, a sought after job, being the gamekeeper?

COOK: Yeah, it was at, at that time. I'm not sure that there's even a need for one now. But inc-, incidental to that, the first time I went home, of course, I was grown up by then actually. And my brother was working for a butcher. And he said, "Mrs. so and so wants you to come and see her." That Mrs. so and so was the, a farmer, or the, maybe he was the foreman of the immediate, where, where we lived, because this was a duplex. My mother on this side and Mrs. somebody or other on the other. And she wants you to come and see her. And she had two little girls. They were always wheeling me around in a carriage of some kind. And they were called Kathy and Agnes. I remember Kathy and Agnes because after we moved away I was always telling my mother I wanted to go see Kathy and Agnes. But, so I did go to see her and she gave me a

little jelly dish of some kind as a memento. And she said, "These roses that are growing over the top of the house, these climbing pink roses, your mother planted." And she said, "You had measles." Or something. I'm not sure whether she said measles or chicken pox. But you fussed so much that your father stayed home from work and held you all day. So whatever it was. So I was able to say, well, I had chicken, I think I had chicken pox, but I'm not sure, when they'd ask. (they laugh)

LEVINE: So did you go to school in Scotland?

COOK: I went to school in Chirnside. Oh, yes, I went, I went to first three grades. We had, I was always very good. Apparently I was very smart in school. I know, because they pushed me ahead. I never was in the third grade. But I went into the fourth grade, and then I left.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

COOK: So I went first, second and third. But I, they put me ahead into the fourth, skipped it. And the third grade seemed to the grade they skipped in this country. When I got here I heard a lot about the third grade, people skipping it.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: It must be a very unimportant grade. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Well, tell me what you remember about school in Scotland.

COOK: Well, school, I liked school. We, we went to a big school. It was a, the only school in town. But it was a great, big stone building. Everything was built with stone in Scotland. And I had, there was a kindergarten, because I vaguely remember playing with, making figures out of, what do you call it? Clay. Clay. But I wasn't there very long. And I think I really remember it because when Jim went to school, that's where he was. But he wouldn't stay. He'd always find me. I got slapped, I got spanked, I got strapped by this terrible teacher we had in the, in the fourth grade. I didn't have her very long, but, Jim was al-- he wouldn't stay at school. Wouldn't stay in school. (she laughs)

LEVINE: What, how was the schooling Scotland different from the school you went into when you came to this country?

COOK: Well, we had, I think only one teacher in every grade that I was in in the old country. But I think in the lower grades here, there was only one teacher to a room. This one teacher taught everything. I mainly remember grammar. I remember writing. Handwriting. We had books. Penmanship books. Did they have penmanship here? And they were in lines. There were four or five lines. And, for instance, you made a, you struck a T by going up to the first line, like this. (she indicates) And then up to the second line was straight. That's where you crossed the T. Then up to the next line. Is that how you learned to write? That's how I learned to write. But when I came to this country the kids were all making scribble marks, you know, and I look in front of me and

try to make the scribble marks, and sometimes they'd be doing like this.  
(she indicates) Did you have that?

LEVINE: Did they teach it differently...

COOK: Yeah, penmanship. Penmanship books. This was the fourth grade, so the people were just starting to learn to write. But, but I had learned to write long before that. I think that the schools were far-- further advanced.

LEVINE: In Scotland?

COOK: In Scotland. Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Were you a religious family in Scotland?

COOK: Oh, my mother. They were singers. These girls were all singers. My mother and all her sisters sang. Min, the youngest one who was always the lead in everything, she sang beautifully. Now, that was the youngest one. But my mother took us to church every Sunday. We had no Sunday school, and, in our churches. My brother and I sat up in the loft, up in the, where my mother could look at us up there. And then the minister was up, pew, the minister's, what do you call it where he sits, preacher's (unintelligible). Pulpit.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

COOK: Was, you go up several stairs, so he was, he could see us, too, you know. And my mother used to give me so many little sour balls, you know. And I'd keep Jim quiet by promising him, but we got along fine. And we stayed, there was never any Sunday school. I never had to go to Sunday school. But because we had, first thing in the morning we had church and school. (she laughs) Of course, there was nobody to argue whether we were stepping on their toes or bothering somebody else's religion. It was all one religion. They was all Presbyterian.

LEVINE: You mean, like the whole town, or all the people that...

COOK: Yeah, the people that went to church. Of course, there's always a bunch, no matter where you are, that don't go to church. But my mother went, and she sang, and...

LEVINE: Did you, do you know any of the church songs from way back then?

COOK: Well, I couldn't, not really. A lot of them, there's, that you sing today in church. Are you Jewish?

LEVINE: My father was Jewish, but I wasn't raised Jewish. So...

COOK: Uh-huh. I thought you were because I don't, can't tell you the number of Levine friends that I have in upstate New York.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: I had one friend who was raised Catholic. And she fell in love with this Jewish merchant. And he was a nice guy, too. He used to play cards with my, my husband when they were there. Played poker. And she, she had to get permission from her priest to marry this fellow. He was a, a real good guy. Nice looking fellow, too. And the priest gave her his blessing, and said, "I know you'll be very happy." And I never heard of such a thing, because I was going with a Catholic boy for about three years. But we could never come to an understanding. And...

LEVINE: Did he, so, your religion, Presbyterian has been very important all through your life?

COOK: Yeah, very important all my life. Yeah. First, well, my grannie made it so. She had everybody going to church. But it's different now. There's not even the church that I went to with my mother every Sunday morning, is now sort of a civic building. They call, they use it for everything. When I was home this past summer, this is what? I'm mixed up on the weather. It's a year, I guess, since I was there. It was bitter cold. And we nearly froze to death ourselves. (she laughs) (she inhales) You'd breath and you could feel that chill right down in your lungs, cutting. And they took, the lady that I was staying with said, "I'll take you in the, to church, and you'll see how the church is." And, now, and it was full of women with little children. And it was a place where they could go, you know, to, to, the preschool children.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: Where they could go. And they were warm. It was stifling in there, it was so hot.

LEVINE: Well...

COOK: So there was no church as far as I could see in that town then. It's just more or less Godless no matter where you go now. You see. You're not supposed to be that superstitious anymore. But I, we keep going here, in a church here. But that's all...

LEVINE: Did, did you have, were you, did you go through any kind of ceremonies as far as the church was concerned, you personally?

COOK: Yeah. You're talking about then?

LEVINE: Yeah.

COOK: Well, I don't remember that, we sang hymns. We sang hymns. And, of course, they didn't have any electric things. They had an old fashioned pump organ, and somebody had to go in early and pump it up. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: And they had an organ. But they had, we sang from our bibles. I have old bibles here. And they call, for instance, the psalms are

metered. And you, you, they just prayed they learned the tune and sang from their bibles. Even the choir. As far as I knew that's all they did.

LEVINE: Did you, do you remember any foods, any dishes that your grandmother made, or that you...

COOK: Yeah. Well, they all were very simple. We had soup. (she chuckles) They called it kale.

LEVINE: Kale?

COOK: Kale. That was the word for soup. It's English, of course. You're speaking in mutilated English. That's what it is. And it's all made with vegetables. Except it has a bone, a soup bone to start. And it might be from the day, Sunday's roast or something. And you just boil it and make soup out of it. And they raise, everybody has a little vegetable garden. And you always have cabbage and brussel sprouts and onions and potatoes. Cabbage, I think that's, maybe five, I don't know, vegetables in your little plot. And somebody came and planted my mother's garden every year. And, some old gent, I guess, used to come. And I don't know, but there was a man down at, at the church that was always kind to my mother. And he must have, it must have been him that sent the old guy that planted our garden. And he brought, he made me a little box with this wire front and a white rabbit. And that was...(she laughs)

LEVINE: Hmm.

COOK: And once he got away or somebody stole him. I don't remember, but I was broken hearted about that.

LEVINE: Do you, how was it decided that your, that you would come to America?

COOK: Well, my mother got flu, the flu. She died of the flu. You know, I think it was world wide, that flu epidemic.

LEVINE: Oh. What year was that, do you know?

COOK: That was, that's the year, 1918, the year of the end of the war. I remember that distinctly because my mother, it's the last time I saw my mother on her feet. We had walked to the top of the hill on the big, the street that went all through town from top to bottom. We were just a cross hill, they called it, on this cross hill. We walked up to there. She had Jim in her arms. He was all well dressed, in warm covered clothes, that were probably made by Aunt Min with some of my Uncle Johnny's clothes were he was fighting in, in Europe. She cut up his clothes for Jim. (she laughs) And it, it was, he had a warm hat and warm, fluffy coat. And my mother, I never saw her wear anything more than a suit. Costume, they called it. Costume. A suit. A little coat and long skirt. And a shawl. And it was a big shawl. It came, covered her pretty completely. She had that around her, she had Jim in her arms. And every time a soldier lad would come by, Jim would go, you know. (she

gestures) Salute (unintelligible) And that was the Armistice celebration. That why I remember Armistice Day that year. It was my last year in, in Scotland.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about the war, any, any memories at all? How did the war affect you when it was going on...

COOK: Well, it affected us in one thing. We had, sugar was rationed. My mother never used much sugar. And Grannie with all her children and foster children got half of my mother's sugar ration. And she's, Grannie, my mother sent me down to my grandmother's, like Little Red Riding Hood with the sugar rations that she didn't want or need. All the, the sugar we ever used would be what she used in her tea because she drank black tea and lots of sugar probably. But then we, down at the foot of the hill there were a certain fruit that I never hear of in this country. It's a berry. Gooseberry. You know what a gooseberry is?

LEVINE: I've heard of it. I don't know it though.

COOK: Yeah, gooseberries. And they used to grow in an open pasture that used to be an ancient church there, and it was all a pile of rocks mostly. And gooseberries grew in back of there. And when they -- people around start picking gooseberries, I had to take this pitcher. And it ordinarily would have milk in it, with a handle. Pitcher about that high. (she indicates) Metal, with a handle. And I'd go and pick that full of gooseberries. And then she'd stew them up with, oh, sugar to sweeten 'em. That's all we ever used sugar for. We had oatmeal for breakfast. Maybe some of that fruit. And that's all. Milk. Milk. And then I'd go to my grandmother's about once a week, or when, whenever she got her sugar rationing, I'd take Grandma's sugar, like Little Red Riding Hood. (she laughs) I'd walk down there to the station cottages where my grandmother lived. And there were three, I think three of the girls at home at that time.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE                      BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

COOK: The same time, the same year that I came to Scot-- to America, my aunt (unintelligible). I don't remember which one it was. Liz, I guess. She married a man from, not Australia, but bordering island.

LEVINE: Wales?

COOK: No, no, no. In Australia.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: There's two islands, the upper and the lower.

LEVINE: New Zealand?

COOK: New Zealand. Yeah, he must have been an, an officer in the service, British service or something in, in New Zealand, because he came home to get her. And they were married at the same time this, as I came

to America. And I came to the United States in eleven days, and she was seven weeks on the sea. Of course, all we had were boats in those days. And I guess she was so sick and so upset over it all that she never came home, never went home. I could just see her saying, or hear her, "I'll never - " they didn't write, but he'd write.

LEVINE: Now, wait a minute. Your aunt went to New Zealand on a boat?

COOK: Yeah, she went on a boat. That was the only way you could get there.

LEVINE: Hmm-hmm.

COOK: No...

LEVINE: And it took that long?

COOK: It was about seven weeks. And I came in a short time.

LEVINE: Well, so your mother, after your mother died, you must have been about seven?

COOK: No, when my mother died I was in, I would have been in third grade, but actually I was in second grade. So, yes, you're right. Probably seven.

LEVINE: And what happened after your mother died? What happened with you and your brother Jim?

COOK: Well, Grannie took us in. Nobody else wanted us or had reason, one reason or another. You see, my mother had several sisters and a brother, I guess. But this other brother in America, he would take me.

LEVINE: Oh. I see. Do you remember your mother's funeral and all that?

COOK: No, I didn't, my, the last time I saw my mother was at that celebration. But then she was in bed. And they wouldn't let me near her. And I'd get over there and try to talk to my mother, and they'd say, I remember my grandmother saying, "Get her out of here." And they took me away. And I think I, I still correspond, or when I'm writing I correspond with this girl that's on the Isle of Man now. You know where that is? She's been living on the Isle of Man for a long time, because her sister, whose husband was in the British Service in a foreign place, chose to come to the Isle of Man to live when they retired, back where the, he said the weather was better than it was on, it's close to France, you know. And so they live there.

LEVINE: Now, is this someone who was a friend of yours when you were young?

COOK: We were in school together. Madge wasn't in the same grade as, as, school as I was. But she, she went to London when, when she got out of school. Because I left while we were in the fourth grade. And Madge

was, she had something, shook, she shook. And it was, something was wrong with her. She couldn't write straight. And she, her head shook. But apparently she had -- was nothing to deter her from getting a job, because she went to work in London. She went to London, and worked for Old Bailey in the court system. And she was the person that - that took care of people that were released but had to be, but had to be controlled, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, probation?

COOK: Yeah. She was a probation officer for their courts in London. And when she retired, she went to live with, on the Isle of Man close to her. So that each time I went home, I did not see Madge except the first time. The first time she was still in London working. Still hadn't retired. And we, we stayed at her, we stayed there a week. And she said, "Here, this is your home until it, for the week, and I'm going to go live with so and so." Some friend of hers..

LEVINE: (she laughs) Uh-huh.

COOK: ...for a week. "And this is your home while you're here. There's plenty of food in the pantry, and- " And I remember that distinctly because when we got ready to leave to come, you know, get on a plane get home, we were there just a week. And we went downtown to replenish her foodstuff that we'd used up. And they brought all this stuff out, and they piled it up on the counter, and they rung up our money and walked away. Now, how are we going to get that home? They didn't have anything to put it in.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: Did you ever hear of that?

LEVINE: Well, I guess people brought their own bags.

COOK: Yeah, they carry their own things.

LEVINE: Hmm-hmm.

COOK: But we didn't know that. (unintelligible) she didn't know we were going to buy all this stuff anyway. So I don't know, we stuffed everything in our pockets, and I made a sling out of my sweater, and put...

LEVINE: (she laughs) Well, so, it was your uncle, somebody in the family said your uncle would like to have you come?

COOK: Yeah, "Your uncle will take you out there." In fact, appar-, I guess he probably sent the money. As far as I know, he probably did. I...

LEVINE: So you went by yourself?

COOK: When I went back, when I came over?

LEVINE: Yeah.

COOK: I came over on this, yeah, I was by myself. Grannie put me on the boat, and I couldn't go anywhere. So I was on the boat.

LEVINE: Now, what...

COOK: Eleven days.

LEVINE: What was the name of the ship?

COOK: The Columbia.

LEVINE: And do you remember leaving your house, your grandmother's house and going?

COOK: Hmm-hmm. Yes. Then the ship sailed from Glasgow. And we lived in Edinburgh, which is, no we didn't live in Edinburgh. Edinburgh is the other big city. Two big cities in Scotland then. Edinburgh and Glasgow. The ships all sailed from Glasgow. That was a big ship building place. They built all those big ships that they used to, there's Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth and all. Great, big ship building place. And so we, Grannie had some friends there. It's probably, well, we went and we stayed overnight, and, with these friends.

LEVINE: You and your grandmother?

COOK: Hmm-hmm.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you packed to take with you?

COOK: Well, Gran-0, Aunt Min had, had good clothes for me, and just a couple of old outfits to wear every day. And underclothes. And I had a real pretty black velvet Tam o' Shanter. Everybody wore a Tam o' Shanter. It was really pretty one. It had aqua colored yarn crocheted around the edge. And then Aunt Min made me a real pretty dress that was only for Sunday or for dress up. And it was black...

LEVINE: Do you remember it?

COOK: Oh, yes, I remember it. I didn't have very many clothes at any time in my life. It was a black hounds tooth check. And it was a, a, a regular, a regular, it was fitted around the waist. It had a belt. Velvet. Black velvet, with a couple of designs here. And it had a little jacket. But the black velvet, and then my black velvet Tam o' Shanter had this, oh, it was the same color, it was apple color, on the Tam. Tam o' Shanter.

LEVINE: Was it a long skirt?

COOK: Yeah, it was quite long. Not, not...

LEVINE: Not all the way down to your ankles?

COOK: No. Not all the way down. But it was a, it was a nice dress. But the, the top was the only thing I had that approached a coat or sweater or anything. I didn't have any sweaters. (she jostles her mic) I, I remember my aunt saying to me I had to be examined like all the other people coming in on third class. You had to be examined. And, but, it didn't take any, it wasn't very long (unintelligible) I must have looked healthy, and I, except for the eyes I guess.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: You know, there is something that is very contagious in the eyes. Do you know what it is?

LEVINE: Yeah, it's called trachoma.

COOK: Is that what it is? Well, anyway, that's all I remember -- is getting my eyes pulled. (she laughs) (unintelligible) looked in my eyes. But the rest of them, yeah, apparently it wasn't important.

LEVINE: So was this examination before you left?

COOK: On the boat.

LEVINE: On the boat?

COOK: That was on the boat before they, I was there, before I got off the boat.

LEVINE: Let's see. What else? So your grandmother went with you to Glasgow.

COOK: Yeah, she went with. Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And...

COOK: And we stayed at this person's house that she knew. And this person had friends that she knew were going to America. And there was a, have I mentioned? A coup-, an old couple with a daughter. And there was room for me in that particular, what do they call a boat...

LEVINE: Cabin?

COOK: Cabin. The up-, there was the up-, upper cabin and the bot-, and the lower one. And the old couple slept in the bottom, and in the top was this daughter. And she could have been forty and she could have been eighteen. I don't know. But when you're a child, nine year old child, you don't know how old somebody is. She had, she was homely. She had a bunch of hair that was tied here by a piece of ribbon. (she indicates) And the rest of it was all in one lump hanging down her back. And she had, we were across from each other on the top, but we never spoke or had anything to say. And when I wake up in the morning, I'm still waking up at five o'clock. I always have.

I just jumped down from down, get into my clothes, I took them off (unintelligible) the pillow up there, put them on and went, got up and went to the bathroom, and got myself washed, probably (unintelligible) (she laughs) And dressed and went up to the dining room. And it was always full of kids, steerage, you know. Full of kids, all young like me. And we'd sit at the table and eat whatever they gave us, put in front of us. And then we were out on deck for the rest of the day. And I never did see that woman and man again. I think they might have been sick, because there was a lot of sick people on the boat. It was newly painted they said. All done over. And that high seas, the queen came over that year, too, (unintelligible) but in a fancier boat, of course. And it was very, very rough seas, and she was sick a lot, the queen was. But the other people said that the boat had all been redone. Real painted all over, fixed up downstairs, and the smell of the paint and the smell of the different stuff was what was making the people sick. It wasn't the rough seas. But...

LEVINE: Did you go, on your excursions around the boat, did you go up into second or first class...

COOK: Oh, yes, we were all over that boat, this kids. All the kids. There was no, one time we got down in the engine room, and, but we were kicked out of there fast enough. I can remember scrambling up those stairs. And then the seas were kind of rough on occasion. (she laughs) And besides having your breakfast slide down the table when you started to eat, you know, this way or that way, they, the, the rough seas made a lot of people sick. And they said it wasn't the seas, they weren't that bad. It was the paint and stuff, was keeping the older people sick. And that might have been where those old people were because I never did see them.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: But I'd see that younger one occasionally. But she might have been forty, you know, or fifty. And she could have been eighteen. I...

LEVINE: Did, can you compare what it was like in the first class with, with the steerage or third class?

COOK: Well, they had, they had nice social rooms, they had. Of course, we had social rooms, too. No, I don't know anything about, the food was probably better or fancier. I had some roses. In one, on one of the trips I had, I had roses sent to me by the gang in the office -- that where I worked. They had wired me roses.

LEVINE: When you went back?

COOK: When, when, uh-huh.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

COOK: And they, they were, they kept very well. But I never was in, we had a nice lounge, and they had my roses in there. But I never had seen, only one time we had a dance up in the upper...

LEVINE: When you were first coming over?

COOK: No. The last time.

LEVINE: Oh, later. Uh-huh.

COOK: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Well, let's see. So, do you remember coming into the New York Harbor on the ship?

COOK: (she sighs) What do I remember about that? I don't think I remembered anything about coming in that time.

LEVINE: How about Ellis Island? Do you remember anything about that?

COOK: Well, the day that we were to leave our, to leave, and we landed, no, I don't know anything about Ellis Island. That, it wasn't a part, yes, it must have been when we embarked. Because we just got off the boat and went into this place with all the people going in different directions. For instance, the older ones would go to one doctor, I suppose, and the younger ones would go to some other ones. And, so I was in, all they were all waiting, they were waiting, my aunt and uncle were waiting for me when I come out of the examining room. And she said to me, "Run and get your coat so we can get going," you know, "We've got to get going." We had to, to get to New York, then get a, a train there.

And I, so I said, "This is my coat." And I showed them what I had on was my coat. "Is that all you have for a coat?" "That's all I have for a coat." That's all I had. So they, they went to New York, we went to New York, and they, and I think they might have had a rebate, because they sent money for me to come second class. And my, this woman and her husband and daughter coming from Glasgow to New York was ideal for Grannie. She didn't want to, so she didn't take all the money that they sent to bring me. But I know they sent the money, because I was reminded of it for, off and on. (they laugh)

LEVINE: So, so they took you to a store when you got to New York?

COOK: They took me to a big store in New York. And you know, they had a lot of department stores in New York that were second class, but the, everything you got was, I shopped there growing up. You know, when I go to New York, the big stores, and you'd be down in the basement and you could try clothes on right there and all. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Klein's...

COOK: Yes, uh-huh, Klein's.

LEVINE: Yeah.

COOK: But then they got me a real warm coat which, Grannie never dreamed we'd be so cold as we were in New York, in Maine. It was terribly cold.

LEVINE: Well, how did you feel when you met your aunt and uncle? Do you remember what your impression was at first?

COOK: No, I didn't, no, I don't remember having any feelings about them.

LEVINE: Were you afraid, were you...

COOK: No.

LEVINE: ...excited, were you...

COOK: No, I, I wasn't excited at all. I, if anything, I was sad, because I, leaving my brother was just crushing. I couldn't, couldn't stand to leave him. My mother left me in charge with him every time she went out of the house. I, I just, it just killed me to have to leave him. And, so I didn't, and I had, they had a son, a boy my age in Maine. And he was a, he was abusive, and he was stupid. Stupid. Didn't have a brain in his head. And I always had to help him with his homework. Didn't do any good. He never learned. Never learned. In fact, he died when he was between fifty and sixty then. I can't remember just what age it was, because we were the same age. That's what made it difficult. And he couldn't get anything through his head. He was really stupid. And I, I got him through school, just, just because I studied, every night I'd study with him, study for a test with him. Plug him, plug it into his head. It just, if he ever absorbed it, I, I don't think he had any, any thinking power at all. (she jostles her mic)

LEVINE: Well, do you remember the train from New York to Maine?

COOK: No, I didn't. I don't remember that.

LEVINE: Do you remember your first impressions of either New York or when you got to Maine, of this country?

COOK: No, except for the terrible snow. You see, getting there in November. Terrible snow. And they put me in school right quick.

LEVINE: What, what was your experience like in school in Maine?

COOK: Well, I, they put me in school at a grade level that I would have been in. And it was different, everything was different. But I never had any trouble in the school.

LEVINE: What, were you the only child in, in the school that had come from another place?

COOK: No, there was one other girl from Eng-, that came from England. She wouldn't say, say the pledge of allegiance. They, we never had to say a pledge of allegiance in Scotland, so I went along with whatever they said. But she wouldn't say it. No, sir. I pledge allegiance, pledge the United States of America. She probably didn't stay in England very long, I don't, in the United States very long, with the attitude she had. I don't know.

LEVINE: Where in Maine were you?

COOK: Rumford, Maine. And it was up, I'm not sure. Close to the New Hampshire border. I'm trying to think of...

LEVINE: The western part of Maine.

COOK: Yeah, very...

LEVINE: Yeah, I know where that...

COOK: ...right, very close to the New Hampshire border, but I can't tell you how far off it was from the, the ...

LEVINE: Yeah.

COOK: ...border.

LEVINE: So, did you stay in Maine then? And what was it like living with your aunt and uncle?

COOK: (she sighs) They were, I was a hired help. I did all the work. I had to, just had to do all the work. I polished floors, waxed, she was very conscious of her, she never stayed in one place very long. We moved a lot from one place to another. And I finally decided it was because she was so quarrelsome. She couldn't get along with people. And when she got mad at them she'd just move. She-- they belonged to this Scottish clan. That was a, a very prominent, you know, where the Scots went they had their clan, you know. And they had their bagpipes and all the rest of it. And she got out of the, the women's group, the clan, what do they call the clan? The, the women were divided, the, have their own organization.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

COOK: Clan. Anyway, she got out of that, because it took, they fought too much. All they did was fight. And I used to always think, well, boy, you must have been the one, one of the leaders. (they laugh) Because she, she, all they did was fight. So she didn't have any, I didn't have any Scottish friends. My friends in Maine were all French.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: The French Canadians, I, they were the kindest people. They, you know, in the, the winter, the first winter in Maine, they made me stay outdoors to get used to the weather. I'd have to go out there and, to get use to the weather. That was it. But the French people could not understand why I couldn't come in. You know, they'd say, "Come on in." I'd say, "No, I'll wait for you out here," you know. Because I could see them peering out the windows, making sure I stayed outside, which I did. But they were the kindest people. They'd say, "This is Margaret. She came from Scotland. It's near France, you know."

And I was always welcome. And I could speak French pretty good to the old, the old people that couldn't speak at all. I learned it, picked up the French. And then in high school I worked in Woolworth's from, well, I had to work at home in the morning. But at twelve o'clock noon I went in and, and in junior high, and I worked until ten o'clock at night. And it was for a dollar and a quarter a day. That was good pay. And that kept me in books, and dues for this club or that club, you know. I never had any clothes to wear. They, I don't know how they could feel among their people that they, that they knew, the Scots, that they knew, even though they didn't go to the meetings, that they would, I was disgrace the way I dressed. Sometimes I'd have to wear her high shoes. And sometimes I'd have to wear her old dresses to school. And I must have been the laughing stock of the whole school. (she laughs) I never had any clothes. Aunt Min used to dress us so well in the old country.

LEVINE: How did you feel about being in America those first few years?

COOK: I didn't like it. I didn't like it at all. I got along real well in school. And people trusted me. They, sometimes the teachers would send me down to the off-, school office, downtown where they kept all their supplies. And everybody seemed to trust me. You could always trust the Scotch. I found that out. That the Scotch were dependable and honest. And...

LEVINE: I was going to ask you that. Are there certain qualities that you have that you consider Scotch?

COOK: Well, I, I know that I, I'm what my mother was, because my mother drove me into being reliable, and people could depend on your word. You must always be honest for that. And caring about other people. And going to church on Sunday. (she laughs)

LEVINE: And how did you meet your husband?

COOK: Well, he, my husband was a widower. I went with an, an Irish Catholic for years, and we, I guess the only real steady boyfriend I ever had. But I could not, I, I don't want to infringe on anything you believe, but I could never accept the pope, the pope. And I couldn't accept the fact that there was nothing in anybody else's religion but the Catholic religion. And I was honest, and I was always caring, and I was, I loved all those French people, and they loved the pope.

LEVINE: Hmm-hmm.

COOK: I loved all those French people. It's because what you, the feeling you have for the person. Not for what they believe in. And, but, Jud [Ph] and I just could never get married. I was in, only in his house once, and he was never inside mine. They couldn't have a Catholic in the house. But (unintelligible) we went together for three or four years, I'm sure. But one time I was in his living room with all his family. And the old man was a good, they were good workers. He was an engineer on the railroad. And his one big regret seemed to the fact that

he killed somebody one time on, on the railroad, you know. It wasn't his fault whatever had happened. But he'd always say that that was, bothered his soul, you know. He was a good man. But one time, he came, I was sitting in the living room with all the family. And he reaches in his back pocket and he says, "See this?" It was a prayer thing, you know. "So and so, who belongs to the Unitarian," or some church he mentioned, "she gave this to me. She picked it up off the bridge. Can you imagine? Can you imagine that? Can you believe it? And she brought this to me because she said she'd like to have whoever dropped it get it back."

And he says, "It's just unbelievable. Nobody else would do it." He said, "They'd just take and kick over, over the bridge. Kick it over." Well, I was insulted. And I, but I never opened my mouth, but I never went back in that house. Never back. And eventually that, that wasn't the breaking point of the whole affair. That, I, we were, all I ever saw of him was on Saturday nights. No, Friday nights and Sunday afternoon. Friday nights he would come up and we'd go to a movie or something. Sunday we'd go to a ball game. There was always baseball games up. Sunday baseball games. We'd go to baseball games on Sunday. Those were the two times I saw him. The rest of the time he was working. And he was never inside my house, because the Scots were just as bitter about the pope as, as we were about the, you know, you just, you just couldn't let anybody else alone. (she chuckles) You just, if you weren't, if you didn't believe like I believe, you. (she sighs)

LEVINE: Okay, I'm going to pause here so I can change the tape.

COOK: Don't you think I've muddled you up enough.

LEVINE: (she laughs) No, not enough. (laughs)

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE                      BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

LEVINE: This is tape two. I'm speaking with Margaret Cook, and it's February 24th, I think. And...

COOK: Get the paper. That's the only way I know. I get the paper the first thing in the morning.

LEVINE: Oh, 23rd. Here, I've got it right here. Okay, it's Wednesday, February 23rd. And this is tape two. And we were talking about how you met your husband.

COOK: I met my husband just by partner, bridge partner, I guess. Everybody played bridge in my generation besides going to beer halls on Saturday night. (she laughs) We played bridge. And looking for a bridge partner, a friend of ours who knew a friend, a friend who didn't have a partner, so we got together as a bridge partner...

LEVINE: How old were you at that time?

COOK: (she sighs) I was in my early twenties.

LEVINE: And where you were living?

COOK: I was living in Potsdam, New York.

LEVINE: Oh. So how did, how was it that you moved from Maine?

COOK: Well, my uncle got, lost his job in the paper mill. It was, a whole car load of paper was shipped wrong, and he took the blame for it because it was in his department. And he insisted that he had nothing to do with it. So somebody has to be the fall guy, you know, and he lost his job. And the fact, the fact that he was never very good to me, very kind to me, was I realized that he never would be dishonest, you know. Said he didn't have anything to do with that shipment of paper. But somebody had, the New York office was in charge, and somebody had to take it. The fall guy, you know. So he was let go, and he got a job in a paper mill in Potsdam, New York, and which was a night job. Night foreman. So I had to go. Nothing would do but I had to go. Nothing would do but that I had to go, too. Because she wouldn't stay alone. She was the type that always looked under the bed before she went, got into it, you know. She was scared...

LEVINE: Was she, was she from Scotland as well?

COOK: Oh, yes. But she wasn't, she wasn't very bright. And she wasn't very kind, either. Is that all right? (she moves her mic around) So, but I had to go. And I had a pretty good job. I made twenty dollars a week. (she laughs) That was a lot of money in those days.

LEVINE: In Rumford?

COOK: Yeah. So, I got a job in, in Potsdam, too. I didn't get one right away, but I had, I had a pretty good job.

LEVINE: What were you doing?

COOK: Just a stenographer. There, they, the man I worked for was, he went to the mill to help reduce accidents. A safety manager. That's what he was. A safety division engineer. The mill and, and Potsdam had gotten so bad, and in Maine, too, where they had to hire a safety engineer, or they couldn't buy insurance. They couldn't get accident insurance.

LEVINE: What was happening to people in those mills?

COOK: Well, in those mills they shipped the, the wood that they made they, they boiled down the wood, to make wood, if you know anything about paper making, to make pulp, to make paper. And they, they, they would float the logs down the rivers, and they'd go out with these sharp things and hook the logs. And the woodland people, the people that worked on the woodland department all, that's where the accidents all were. And they'd get severe cuts. I even sold, in my department, shoes with steel toes. Boots with steel toes. Another thing they did was run around on top of the machines, and, in their bare feet. And so they fought those steel toed shoes. They didn't want them. But I sold them, and while I worked in that department. We had twenty-four hour nursing service. We

had a doctor that came in every morning for an hour to pick up the accident reports that we had during the night. It was terrible. And we had physicals once a year right there in my, my office, we'd have physicals.

LEVINE: Was mill work...

COOK: Dangerous.

LEVINE: It was dangerous. And was it well paying, relatively, or no?

COOK: No. As I said, I got twenty dollars a week for what I did in the office. And that was about standing pay for a stenographer. And...

LEVINE: So, when, when you met your husband, was your husband from Scotland?

COOK: No, he was Irish. (she laughs) He was Irish and so was all his family. He was a good fellow. My husband, you're talking about?

LEVINE: Yeah.

COOK: My husband. No, he, what did you ask me?

LEVINE: Was he from Scotland?

COOK: No, no. His family were all New England, Eng-, English Irish. They all, they, they were, my husband went to, he started in, in Tufts. He got what student gets, students get every now and then that lays them low They call it the kissing disease.

LEVINE: Mononucleosis.

COOK: Yes, he got that in the fall. When he went home for Thanksgiving he, he was so sick that he never did return to school until that year. And when he did go back to school, he went somewhere else. I don't know where he learned bookkeeping and stuff like that. More practical, you know.

LEVINE: Was there a time when you changed your attitude about wanting to go back to Scotland?

COOK: Never.

LEVINE: You always wanted to go back?

COOK: I always wanted to go back. Now I'm satisfied. I don't, now I don't think I'll ever go back, because I'm not sharp anymore. I'm not quick to learn. I, I, I...

LEVINE: The reason you don't want to go back is because you don't feel sharp, or...

COOK: No, I don't feel, I, I'm not very capable of doing anything. I would, I, my husband takes charge of everything. Now, maybe that's, he, maybe he spoiled me in that sense. I don't know. I, as I say, I don't know how to run that thing over there. (she indicates) I don't know how...

LEVINE: The air conditioner?

COOK: ...we've got a new, we've got a new oven. Electric oven, or what do you call it?

LEVINE: A microwave?

COOK: A microwave. Got a new microwave. The old one that I knew was just a simple one I'd had for years. This one is all technical. I said, "Don't, just don't leave me with that thing. I don't know, I don't want to know anything about it."

LEVINE: Well, when, when I say did you ever change from wanting to go back, I mean to go back there to live.

COOK: No.

LEVINE: Did you, did you, when you first came here you were pretty unhappy it sounds like...

COOK: Yes. Very much.

LEVINE: ...that you wanted to return...

COOK: Hmm-hmm.

LEVINE: ...to your brother in Scotland. Did, did that change at some point?

COOK: Well, he died, of course. He was a, he, they all had, my father died of, there I go again. And he had the same disease my father had. It was a, it was a blood disease. (she pauses) When you don't have sufficient blood in your...

LEVINE: Not a hemophiliac?

COOK: No. It's (she pauses), my brother died of it. My father died of it. It's, and they testing me down to the, leu-, leukemia.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: Leukemia. My father died of leukemia. And that's what my, my brother died of leukemia. And I have a new doctor down here, a woman that I like very much. And she doesn't want what your previous doctor had, your records. She wants her own records. So I wrote down about what I had. Father died, leukemia. Mother died, weariness, tired out, you know, from work. (she laughs) Brother died, leukemia, and so forth and so on. So she always says to me, "With your record?" I say, "I

don't need that medicine." "With your record?" (she laughs) No, "With your history?" That's what she said.

LEVINE: Well, if you were to think about the aspects of you that are Scottish, or customs or attitudes, is there, is there anything that if you were to divide yourself up between American and Scottish, are there qualities that you have of each? Or how do you feel? Do you feel more American than you feel Scottish, or...

COOK: I'm American. Yes, I'm American now, there's no doubt about that. Scottish definitely would be my history, my background. But my present living, day of living now is American, method of living. We're American. My children are all Americans. I didn't, I didn't become a citizen until, well, until the, the people in Miami started imported all these people coming in from other countries. And especially on boats and things, you know. They were escaping from other countries. And Miami was full of people that were seeking citizenship. And I decided that I'd better become a citizen.

Prior to that I thought I was good enough citizen. I didn't know it's going to make any difference to me, the fact that I wasn't legally American. Didn't bother me a bit. I, I didn't vote. My husband kept saying, "Here we are, all citizens of the United States and you just don't want to," I said, "I'm a good citizen. What's the matter with me? I'm, I do the best I can to be a good citizen." And, but I finally decided it's time that I took up my citizenship. And it hasn't made one difference in the way I live. Not one bit.

LEVINE: Well, the fact of these people coming in, often illegally...

COOK: Hmm-hmm.

LEVINE: What, what was it about that that made you decide that it was time...

COOK: I, I won't, I wondered if that had any balance or weight against my not being a citizen. I don't think so. I don't know whether that. It must have. Probably it did have. But I was afraid that they'd ask me who was vice-president under so and so's president, and I would, I'd forget my history. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah.

COOK: That I, American history that I had. Because I know, I am very, very forgetful. Very forgetful. But I went to Miami and became a citizen. Not too long ago. I've got a little American flag in my dining room window to, to show that I got an American flag with all the rest of them when they got their citizenship. (she laughs) But...

LEVINE: Do you, would have any advice for people who were coming to this country at this time, who were coming here as immigrants?

COOK: Well, my own country people, my own country, they're so much better, thoroughly advised about things, you know, now, with your

televisions and all. And there are some people that are anti-American here that were raised in this country, because they don't like the way that our government is run, and everybody complains. Everything is in the open now. I don't know that, that I would ever tell anybody they shouldn't become American. But anybody that I, I have an uncle, a cousin in England that we stayed with last year. We left Scotland and went to England, it was so cold in Scotland. And I have a cousin there. They're very good, very, very good people.

But they have a son that lives in Houston. I know he's working in Houston for the same company that my son is working for in Miami. It's, it's has to do with, the airlines, with the background of airlines. (Levine coughs) They're all, they're not such and such, such and such an air, they're, they're built on what keeps an airplane running, or what keeps an airline in, financially secure. They've lost so much, airlines have lost money so much. It's all got to do with computers. It's all got to do with the, what, what makes a, a company successful, and what isn't. That's the company that my cousin in England and his son in Houston and my son in Miami. He has started, he started with Eastern Airlines when he got out of college. He graduated from the University of Florida. Florida State, not the University of Florida. And got in with a, a, oh, it was Eastern Airlines that he went to work for first.

LEVINE: What is, what is his name, your son?

COOK: Darby. His name is Darby, too. Darby Cook. Darby Philip. My hus-, my husband is Marcellus Darby. He hates Marcellus, but that was his father's name. Marcellus Darby Cook. But Darby was a family name, too. So I, I thought that Darby would be simple, and I didn't want the Marcellus, so I called him Darby Philip Cook, my son. And...

LEVINE: Do you have other children, too?

COOK: Oh, yes. I had, I had Janet. My first one was Janet. Named her after my mother. Janet, she's a, she works for Allstate Insurance. And her husband is manager of Allstate in North Miami. She works in Fort Lauderdale for Allstate. And they have a daugh—you know what she's doing? Works for Allstate. (she laughs) Now, you know what she's doing now? She's a very, very bright girl. She graduated from Auburn University. You know where that is? So did her sister. Auburn University. That's in, oh, it's in Florida...

LEVINE: I don't know it.

COOK: ...no, it's not in Florida. It's in the Augusta area. Georgia.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: It's in Georgia. But they're all entangled in this airplane business and computers. Jill, my first granddaughter, she is an electrical engineer. She was a graduate of Auburn University. The, the month that she was to graduate, her fiance, call him her boyfriend, was hit by a drunk driver. Killed. Well, you can imagine what that does to

a girl. (unintelligible) she was, oh, in shock for a long time. She joined M.A.D.D., the mother's for drunk drivers. She joined that organization and worked hard for that. Then she went to Central America. First she went to Mexico, and, on a church project to build houses for the poor down there on the river. A mother with ten children, and she didn't have a room for - of her own, and she had a drunk, this one of a drunken mess for a fa-, a husband. So she went down there two years. Took work for that...

LEVINE: Was this a Presbyterian organization that she was involved with?

COOK: I don't know if it was directly affected by the church or sponsored by the church. I don't know because, I don't think so. I think it had to do with the death of that boy. All that. Because when she, the first time she went down there she went to Belize, and they had computers that had been donated by the church that nobody could put together. She went down there to install those computers and make them run. And then after she got back there, she went back to Belize again last year. (she chuckles) But last year she was working with a couple of people from the church. One was a dentist who was doing teeth. And, and they, they work with children. They do, all do good work. And that's Jill's make up. That's Jill's make up. She's got to be doing something like that. So I said to my son, Darby, in Miami, the last time, I said, "I wonder what, how Jill is going to end up." He said, "She's going to end up in the church. That's what's, where she's going to end up."

LEVINE: Well, now, you have Darby and you have Janet.

COOK: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Do you have other children, too?

COOK: Yeah, I had Jim. Jim works for lawyers. What do they call it when they, they do all the, they do all the leg work for lawyers. They're paralegal.

LEVINE: Paralegal.

COOK: He's a paralegal, Jim is, in West Palm Beach. And my youngest one, Jeffrey. Jeffrey was, had, had very, very bad life. He, when, when we were, when I was working, I had put him in the care of a sitter. And while there [not understood] she was taking care of him [not understood] dry Drano. He was just three years old. And apparently it was in her playground, and somebody had thrown out dry Drano, and the can had fallen off. And he was showing off in front of everybody. And he was playing tea party or something, and put some in his mouth. And swallowed. It was dry. The minute he inhaled it, it came down and landed about halfway between the esoph-, in the esophagus and burned it. And we were years, for years he was down in Miami. They just put things down to stretch it open.

We finally took him to Boston Children's Hospital. And they pulled up the stomach, cut the bad place out. It was halfway up, you

know, halfway up, and cut the bad place out, and sewed it together. And after two or three trips up there to get it stretched out, open, because it would, it would grow together, and in the meantime he had a permanent tube in his stomach. He went to school with that, too. And he came home at noon. I was always here, and fed him his, it ended my work, my career as a stenographer again. But I wanted to be with him. And, so we pumped it full. This kept him, you know, he could drink milk. He could drink soft drinks. But hardly any food, you know. So, by, by the time he got to junior high, my son Darby said, "Mother, you've got to do something about him. I can't see him going to," he had a thing, tube in his nose, too. And said, "I can't see my brother going to high school, and everybody dating, and him with all this contraption on him," you know. Couldn't play football or anything like. He could run. He was a fast runner. That's all he could do.

But anyway, now he's all right. He went, after that mending he has a short esophagus. But he's, he's well. He can eat just about everything. And of course he didn't get much schooling, but it didn't seem, some people aren't affected by that. He went to school with all this stuff in him, on him, you know. And the first time, I think the third grade, I have to tell you this because to me it was very impressive. He came home with a, with a passing card into the third grade. And I said to, "Jeffrey, you haven't been to school a, a month in, in this, this past year. You haven't been for a solid month at one time. And how could you have gotten a passing," "Well, that's what he gave me," he said. "And so, that's what he gave me, pass into third grade." I went down and I talked to that teacher with that report card in my hand. I went down and I talked to him and I said, "I appreciate your passing Jeffrey into the third grade, but do you know how much schooling he's missed this past year? How could he be prepared for the third grade. I'd rather have him repeat it and get it." He says, "You're thinking wrong." He said, "That boy has got more on the ball than either one of your other two boys that's gone ahead of him, and I can vouch for that. He's got more on the ball." He said, "He's got a better mind, he thinks better, he concentrates better." He said, "You can't hold him back."

LEVINE: Wow.

COOK: Isn't that wonderful.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

COOK: Every time I see that man, I cry. Because I, he knew, he was a better judge. But apparently whatever they're teaching, that grade isn't very important because...

LEVINE: Well, that's the third grade, isn't it. Yeah. (they laugh) Well, tell me what your most proud of in your life.

COOK: I think I'm proud of my family. I'm proud of that, that, no credit to mine, that every one of them are, are kind, and good, clean citizens, and they don't drink. (she laughs) They did their smoking when they were in school, when I couldn't stop to keep, stop them from smoking.

And I am, I'm very proud of my family and my husband, although sometimes I, I get mad at him. (laughs) But...

LEVINE: How about this phase of your life? How do you feel about this time in your life?

COOK: Well, I wish I were a little, weren't quite so thick headed. I wish I could concentrate. I, now, here I sit barefooted. Now, if I had, had anything, any wits about me I would have realized that I had at least get my clothes on, you know.

LEVINE: (she laughs) Well, I hope you feel comfortable, because I do, and I'm certainly not going to judge anything about shoes or...

COOK: No, but it's, really it doesn't bother me that -- my husband says the same thing. He says, "Why don't you go to the hair dresser and so keep your hair going," because my hair is nothing but fluff, you know. The older I get the more fluffy it gets. (she laughs) And, "I wish you'd go to the hair dresser and get your hair done." But I said, "Well, I don't drive, and I have to wait for you to pick me up and you take me and all that." So I, I just, I could roll it myself, and it looks pretty good, you know. But...

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else that you'd like to say before we close about coming to this country, or being in this country, or your life...

COOK: Well, I think, I think it was fortunate, like the immediate effect of a person is not, is not what's important. It's how you can handle it. It's how you handle it. How the good Lord keeps you straight, so you, and gives you an opportunity, you know, to develop. I've been fortunate in my friends and my fam-, my own children. And even this, the child that my husband had -when -- that he had adopted, she's a wonder. She's a wonder. She called up this morning. See, he's going to have a birthday this year. He's a, a, what do you call him?

LEVINE: Octogenarian?

COOK: No, no, He's a, he was born on the fir - the twenty-ninth of February.

LEVINE: Oh, a leap year...

COOK: He's a leap year person. So, and every time he has a birthday it's every four years, they celebrate. Now, this year the celebration is going to be with my second son, Jim, in West Palm Beach. So they'll all be there, all the families will be there.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

COOK: And, so that, there's occasion for a celebration.

LEVINE: Did you, did you yourself go back to Ellis Island? Is that how you got this form?

COOK: No. How did I get that? No, it was advertised. And my s-- my little boy, Jeff, the one that's had the trouble, he's, he married a, a girl from New York. She's, she's pl-- out now to get her doctorate. She's very clever. She's a mathematician at the college out here. So, and so, and that's who...

LEVINE: Oh, so she picked up the form and...

COOK: Yeah. She, she went, she's from New York. Her parents live there, but they come down here in the winter. They have an apartment that they, he is apparently not lacking in, financially, because he has a permanent ride on the plane.

LEVINE: Oh.

COOK: He has a frequent...

LEVINE: Flyer?

COOK: Frequent flyer ticket.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

COOK: And the rest of the time his sons run his business. And so...

LEVINE: --- Ellis Island, I imagine that she...

COOK: They've been to Ellis Island, yes. And I don't, no, see, it's hard for us to get anywhere. Our son Darby has a fit because if we go fifty miles up the road, he thinks that his father shouldn't be driving.

LEVINE: I see.

COOK: See, he's, he's, how old is he now? This is, this is his birthday coming up. Well, he's, how old am I?

LEVINE: Yeah. I was just looking at that. You were born June, 1911, so...

COOK: He was born in 1908.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So how old are you right now?

COOK: I'm fifty, sixty, I'm eighty-two I think. Am I? Eighty-three.

LEVINE: Eighty-two. You'll be eighty-three this year.

COOK: See, somebody else has to do all that figuring for me. I don't care how old I am. I mean, I know how old I feel, and that's terrible. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Well, I want to thank you very much for talking with me. And this is...

COOK: But how can you put that into, are you going to condense that some form?

LEVINE: What I'm going to do is bring the tape back to Ellis Island, put it in the library there...

COOK: Hmm-hmm.

LEVINE: ...make a copy of it, send it to you...

COOK: Okay.

LEVINE: ...so your children and grandchildren can hear it.

COOK: Oh, that's wonderful.

LEVINE: And then at some point, we'll type it up just as it is.

COOK: Hmm-hmm.

LEVINE: Then I'll ask you to sign this release form. And then you can, people can come in and they can listen to it. And they can maybe take parts of it if they're writing up something or whatever, use what portions of it make sense for their project.

COOK: Okay. So, maybe sometime I, I'll get up there to, to see that. But right now I, Darby, my son, would have to take us personally to do this because he doesn't trust us to go...

LEVINE: Okay, let me just sign off here. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. I'm talking with Margaret Cook. It's February 23rd, 1994, and we're in Mrs. Cook's home in Fort Pierce, Florida.

EI-435/COOK