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WADIH ROSHIDE ZOGBY

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LEBANON: KAFERTAY

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HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mr. Bob Jones is also present.

SIGRIST: Good morning. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Friday, July 8, 1994. I'm in Utica, New York, central upstate New York, with Wadih Zogby. Mr. Zogby came from Lebanon in 1923. He was fifteen years old at the time. Anyway, good morning, Mr. Zogby. I also want to say that Bob Jones, who has been instrumental in finding people in the Utica area for us, is also present at this interview. Can we begin, Mr. Zogby, by you giving me your birth date?

ZOGBY: July 20, 1908.

SIGRIST: And, uh, where exactly where you born?

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ZOGBY: Uh, a little town in the almost exact center of Lebanon. It's called Kafertay.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

ZOGBY: K-A-F-E-R-T-A-Y.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about the town that you were born in?

ZOGBY: The town that I was born in had twenty-five houses. That was the population of the town. I can count the houses, but I don't remember how many individuals lived in each one of these houses, but they average about four, four-and-a-half, the average. And it had three churches. The three churches, one of them was the town's church, the other was an individual church for one certain family, but everybody went to it whenever it was the holy day of the saint that that church was named after.

SIGRIST: What was that saint?

ZOGBY: St. Elias. And, incidentally, St. Elias happens to be the day of my birth, July 20th.

SIGRIST: So was that a big celebration?

ZOGBY: Yeah, it usually, St. Elias was a holiday in the town, and the town around it. People came from the little villages around there because of the doings that took place for St. Elias day, and everybody congratulated each other and had a nice little party. That was all there was to it. There was . . .

SIGRIST: What was the major industry in this town?

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ZOGBY: Uh, there was no major industry. Everybody owned their home and a piece of land around it. Uh, on that piece of land, Mulberry trees used to grow. The leaves of Mulberry trees were used to raise the silkworm, which made the silk cocoon. Besides that, wherever those trees were, everybody planted their fruits and vegetables in that empty land. Because after you have trees, besides the trees, you have a lot of empty land there. So we used to till them, and plant all our fruits and vegetables. The things that we could not grow on our own land, we bought by the, for the money that we, uh, received from growing and selling that silk cocoon, and that was like wheat, rice and other staples that did not grow on our land. We grew our own vegetables like tomatoes and beans and potatoes and corn, and tended to them.

SIGRIST: Can you talk to me about the silkworm industry and what all that entailed?

ZOGBY: Well, number one, let's begin with the beginning of the silkworm industry. Uh, the silkworm eventually became a cocoon. When the cocoon became fully matured, the worm inside was still alive, it opened up itself from inside, came out and laid eggs, like, uh, oh, any, any flying insect lays – lays eggs. Those eggs, we used to take, we used to buy them. They came from places where they actually made that their business, to provide the eggs to this. Everybody couldn't do that. So we would buy these eggs, and the early spring we would take them in, put them in a closed place where it was hot -- warm and humid, and they hatched. When they hatched, everyone took some of the worms, some of the hatched, yeah, the worms that hatched from those eggs, that they expected. One had a little box, a bigger box, two boxes, whatever. And then they raised, uh, stop it a minute.

SIGRIST: We're just going to pause just for a minute. (break in tape)

ZOGBY: And when they were so tiny. And as we took them we built, like, drawers in

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a, built a scaffold inside and put drawers in, put them on there, and went out. When they were little, we fed them the leaves, that most tender leaves of the mulberry tree. As they grew older, we fed them a little more. That process, we kept on feeding them, until the time came where you had to feed them day and night. They couldn't, they would not stop eating. So you fed them. That whole process took about six weeks, or a little over. Just before the end of those six weeks, they stopped eating and they started producing that silk cocoon. When they produced that silk cocoon, they produced it from the inside, and they kept on adding and adding to it. It's a marvelous process. Nature must have provided that. The only thing that's similar to that here is the, uh, caterpillar. You see what caterpillars do sometimes? Except that the silk cocoon was firm, you understand. So a time came when they were full, and that's when we took those silk cocoons and sold them to receive for our hard work, the money that we needed to buy what we couldn't grow on our own land.

SIGRIST: Where would you sell the cocoons?

ZOGBY: Uh, there would be, in several places there would be a factory that would take those silk cocoons and turn them in -- turn them into silk thread, so that they always had buyers . . . [calls to someone off-mike, 'Go ahead!'] They always had buyers to come and buy those silk cocoons, and they paid you for them according to how firm they were. The man would come and he'd feel them, see how, if they weren't firm, they paid you very little. If they were firm, and you took care of them, it all depended on the temperature and on the care and on the leaves that you fed them -- what kind of a product you would eventually get. So they would take them and they would turn them into silk thread. After they had enough silk thread, there used to be a factory in Lyons, France, that would send people to buy that silk thread and take it and make silk clothing out of it.

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SIGRIST: That's a great description. Thank you for letting me get that all on tape. Do you remember how much you would be paid for . . .

ZOGBY: Exactly no. Because, number one, I was just a child at the time. I don't know what they got paid. Number two, I could not turn that into American dollars. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: But, I mean, is this a profitable business?

ZOGBY: It was enough of a, enough of a – enough of a business that when -- what we received -- we bought what we couldn't grow on our own land. You see? We could not, it was not a factory. It was not something that you made things big out of it. But the people who had the factories that turned the cocoons into thread, they made a little more money, and, naturally, back in France when the silk thread was sold there, they made money when they turned it into shirts or pants or whatever they made out of it. But we made just enough, or not more enough. Let me tell you something about life in the country.

By the time the end of September came, we had everything we needed for the following year within our own homes -- food and clothing and everything as a result of what we grew, reaped the crop. And what we didn't grow, we sold silkworm. Because this doesn't exist any more, no more silkworms. So after October or November, everybody in the town used to visit each other, spend an evening at their homes. There was no television, no radio, no nothing. Evenings, come to night, we'd play cards, we joke, we kid, we tell stories. Until March. March we started working again. And it was the same process, and it was a very easy, long process when you come right down to it.

SIGRIST: Now, you mentioned that you grew tomatoes and, I can't remember the

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other vegetables, but tomatoes, for one.

ZOGBY: I'll tell you later.

SIGRIST: What were the kinds of things that you had to purchase?

ZOGBY: Well, we couldn't grow rice, we didn't grow any clothing except wool. We, every family had several lambs. They grew them from the beginning and cut their wool, used that meat for their own use, and used the wool in order to make clothing that you could knit or, uh, work on to make something out of it.

SIGRIST: Can you talk about that a little bit, how, how you sheared the sheep and how that was turned into cloth?

ZOGBY: Uh, my father used to be a sheep merchant.

SIGRIST: That was his major profession.

ZOGBY: He did many other things, but that was his major profession. What he used to do, once we finished this, with the silk business; he used to go to Anatolia, which was on the northeastern part of Turkey and they grew a lot of sheep. He would buy the lambs as they were born, and then drive them down to the railroad station, which was quite a ways away from there. Then load them on the railroad and bring them in, and he went from one village to the other. "How many lambs do you want to grow?" If you had money to buy them, he sold them to you. If you didn't have money to buy them, he would give them to you and write the thing down. He sold you a lamb that was, oh, probably fifteen pounds. It was just newly born, or a little bit of a thing. By the time you took care of that lamb until it became a sheep weighing a hundred, better, hundred pounds or more, then you slaughtered

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it, then you knew what it was worth, you paid him, or he took part of it. Whatever you sold he – we saved a part of it for what – what he used to do. For his share. And as these people grew these sheep, they probably sheared the wool a couple of times, maybe three, I don't know, used that wool in order to make homemade clothing out of it. And, uh, they used the meat. They used to cook the meat and keep it for the winter.

SIGRIST: How would they do that?

ZOGBY: Well, you would take it, you'd grind it, and you'd put it in a big container. And you'd build some fire under it until it was good and cooked and you'd put some salt in with it, which was a preservative. And then you'd keep it in a container whenever you needed it. It didn't spoil. You'd use it to do your own cooking.

SIGRIST: So there really was no waste.

ZOGBY: No.

SIGRIST: The sheep . . .

ZOGBY: Not even the bones, not even the bones. (he laughs) They used it, they had to-- after they killed that sheep, after they slaughtered that sheep, they would take the bones and they would boil them and make soup out of them. Can you think of anything better than soup made with bones?

SIGRIST: What was your father's name?

ZOGBY: My father's name was Roshide.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

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ZOGBY: Yes. It's spelled, the best way to spell it is R-O-S-H-I-D-E.

SIGRIST: Roshide.

ZOGBY: Yeah. It's not the way it was spelled when we came here, but that's how it was pronounced, Roshide.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about your father's background?

ZOGBY: My father, I was eight years old when he passed away. And, like I said, that was one of his works. And he used to go and get the sheep, fine. But then we had a family who had an awful lot of land. They were, uh, what you would call landowners, or, uh, the old days. And lot of people working for them. Well, he supervised a lot of their help. To have them do, like here they pick beans and peas and all that. Today they have machinery. They used to get these people from the south to come up. When I first came here, they used to come take us up to the field to pick peas. You wouldn't remember that. (he laughs) Maybe – maybe you would. Uh, so these people used to come in to pick the crops.

SIGRIST: Like migrant workers.

ZOGBY: Yeah, yeah. Except that those people were not migrant workers. They lived on the land year around. They received twenty-five percent of the crop.

SIGRIST: As their payment.

ZOGBY: As their payment. So they were called quarters, quarter employees. They belonged to you. If they didn't keep them enough for the rest of the year,

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the landowner, the feudal lord would see to it that they would be there for next year anyway. And my father was a supervisor at the time of crop picking.

SIGRIST: When you were a boy before he died, what do you remember about what he was like as a person, what his temperament and personality was.

ZOGBY: Uh, I'd like to tell you. (he laughs) You won't believe it, but -- the people in the half a dozen towns around us, if they wanted to know what was right and what was wrong, they'd say, "Ask Roshide." That's the kind of a person he was.

SIGRIST: He's sort of uh, he's sort of, let me just, uh . . . (referring to the microphone)

ZOGBY: That's okay, no problem, no problem.

SIGRIST: Don't do that. Um, so he sort of knew what was going on.

ZOGBY: Yeah. He, he was just, and he knew. High education, no. Nobody had any high education. Higher . . .

SIGRIST: Could he read and write?

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah, my father could read and write.

SIGRIST: Of course, he was in business, so he . . .

ZOGBY: Yeah, well, yeah. He could read and write.

SIGRIST: What did he die of?

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ZOGBY: Uh, in 1916 there was, uh, pneumonia came around and the flu in that whole country, and he caught the flu and died of pneumonia.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about when he died?

ZOGBY: (he sighs) I remember I was just a -- young boy and my father died and, uh . . . (a telephone rings)

SIGRIST: We're going to pause just for a moment. (break in tape) Okay, we're now resuming. You said your father died in a pneumonia epidemic in 1916.

ZOGBY: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember, for instance, the funeral, or how they treated the body?

ZOGBY: Uh, well, yes. I remember that the man came to the house, and naturally we were all there, and they wrapped the body in a white sheet, and they made a crude casket out of just plain wood. And he was buried in a time where we did not, it did not belong to us. We were not from that town. We were in another area. Uh, he was buried there, and his tomb is still there. And I remember I cried, "I don't have my father" and all that, and my mother consoled me all that she possibly could. And my mother was a saintly woman, I tell you. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

ZOGBY: Barbara, that was her first name, and her maiden name was Tannoury.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

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ZOGBY: T-A-N-N-O-U-R-Y.

SIGRIST: Did you say T-A-N-N?

ZOGBY: Yeah.

SIGRIST: T.

ZOGBY: Tannoury.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about your mother's background, her parents, and where she came from.

ZOGBY: She came from almost the same town, just right across the creek. And, uh, her parents were practically the same as ours. I don't remember her parents because, why, I remember her mother, but not her father.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about her mother?

ZOGBY: Uh, her mother was an elderly woman, and when I remember her she was way up over seventy, and she was shrinking in size, you know? And she was such a nice lady, demanded nothing, was very happy to be around. Then when we came here, the whole family, I remember my mother's mother crying, "I'll never see you again." I'll never forget that.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's personality like?

ZOGBY: She was an easygoing person, never demanding, satisfied with most everything that she had. She was very happy to be with her children. Well, we came all together. Before we came, let me, let me get myself. I had an older brother who was here before we came. And, uh, during the first World

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War, one third of the population of Lebanon died of starvation or diseases that came after starvation. So after the war ended in 1918, the sea lanes were not open. But once they opened, about 1920, my brother, who was here, kept on writing to us, "Please come, please come." And we were very happy to be out, because we suffered like blazes during the First World War.

What else happened, see, Lebanon was always a pro-West country. Turkey got in the war on the side of the axis of the time. And so knowing that Lebanon was a pro-West, they blockaded the country. And to top it, as if that was not enough, in 1915, or a little bit af-- well, sometimes towards the spring of 1915, we had swarms and swarms of locusts that came to the mountain and ate everything green. So that was the reason why the starvation in Lebanon. So we moved from that one town to the others, where locusts didn't go, where my father used to work with these people, he had a place for us. So after the war, when we started to come here, my father had died. My grandmother was still living on my mother's side. So my mother was very happy to be with all of us, with my brother, who was already here.

SIGRIST: And just get out of Lebanon.

ZOGBY: Yeah, get out from the thing that we suffered for five years of practical starvation.

SIGRIST: Do you know how your parents met?

ZOGBY: No, I don't. Except that I can tell you this. My mother had an older sister who was married to my uncle, my father's brother. And, of course, everybody knew each other in that, well, about, uh, six or seven minutes walk to my grandparents' house on my mother's side.

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SIGRIST: Um, did your mother ever relate to you any stories or circumstances surrounding your birth?

ZOGBY: No, no, she never did.

SIGRIST: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

ZOGBY: We were five brothers and two sisters.

SIGRIST: Can you name everybody?

ZOGBY: Yeah, sure. My oldest brother was Habeeb.

SIGRIST: H-A-B-I-B?

ZOGBY: He used to spell it H-A-B-E-E-B. My second brother is, uh, in Arabic Yusef, but it's Joseph in English. Another brother was Fred, but it was Farid.

SIGRIST: Can you spell it?

ZOGBY: F-A-R-I-D is the way he used to spell it. Another brother was Aalil, A-A-L-I-L, and he just passed away about three years ago. And then myself. My two sisters were Nazha, N-A-Z-H-A, and my other sister is Phillipie. That's P-H-I-L-L-I-P-I-E. And Phillipie and I are the only one that are still alive, but she might just as well not be because she has Alzheimer's. She's had it for twelve years. And she's in a nursing home up in Syracuse. She doesn't recognize me. She doesn't recognize her own two sons.

SIGRIST: That's too bad.

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ZOGBY: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Um, how do you fall in to the brothers and sisters? Are you one of the oldest, one of the youngest?

ZOGBY: I'm the youngest one in the whole family.

SIGRIST: You're the youngest of everybody.

ZOGBY: Yeah, I'm the youngest in the whole family.

SIGRIST: Um, tell me about, you were talking about Turkey blocking off Lebanon during World War One. What do you remember of whatever hardships your family suffered at that time, food shortages, or something along those lines, during World War One.

ZOGBY: Well, because of the, uh, locust swarms that came, we lost that one year's crop. And we didn't have enough seeds to replant. So we suffered starvation because we didn't have anything to eat, and neither did anybody else in that whole area. I mean, even if you had a million dollars, if you had it, you couldn't buy another person's livelihood. He's got to feed his children, too. So this is what happened that we didn't have. We moved to this place beyond the mountain, the Beqaa Valley, if you've ever heard of it, and they used to raise an awful lot of grains there, wheat, corn, chickpeas, lentils. Lentils is a terrific thing to have, you know? You can live on lentils without any meat, you know.

So we moved there, and these people that my father used to work with had an awful lot of land, hundreds and hundreds of acres. And so we lived there for a while. Uh, about three years, I think it was. I'm not sure. So, uh, but back home Turkey needed to run the trains, so they needed wood that used

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to burn running the train. So they came to the country and cut the trees from Lebanon to burn it, to run their trains. They needed metal, so they came and confiscated all our cooking utensils. In order to prevent them from doing that, we would go to the land and dig up a place bury our utensils, and cover it up with dirt so that they wouldn't take it. So, now, this is something that here you never hear about. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Is there a specific instance that you remember of a Turkish soldier interacting with your family, or . . .

ZOGBY: No. Now I don't remember. Because by the time they came I had been on the other side of the mountain. By the time they came there, I had gone. So I don't remember anything, but I do know that I read what a bit-- upon what happened. And, uh, the governor of Lebanon, see, originally Lebanon was an independent country. It was a self-ruling, but under the guidance of Turkey, it had autonomy. But that autonomy was guaranteed by the western countries in Europe, the western Christian countries, France, England, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy. But Turkey was to appoint, a Christian governor, and Turkey was never to conscript any soldiers from Lebanon into their army. But when they entered the war, they forgot all about that treaty. I mean, there was nobody to enforce it, so they started picking up everything, especially when they knew that Lebanon was so pro-West. They really gave us an awful lot of hardships.

SIGRIST: Can you describe for me the house that you lived in, maybe before you went over the mountain, the house you grew up in?

ZOGBY: Yes, yes. I can describe it, as a matter of fact, I could almost draw a picture. But you came in, as you entered the house, there was an opening on the outside. It had a roof on it, and walls, but no, no wall on the inside. You just walk, we used to sit there, you know? Then you walked into the

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house. As you walked in, there was a place inside like, like this table, but it was like from this end to that. And at the end of this there was a fireplace. We built fires there, and the smoke came out this way. Now, the house was divided in just about halves. There was no wall or anything in between, but to one side was devoted for storing things, and when we raised the silkworms we had to build shelves, like, so that's where we used to build them temporarily. We'd take them out the minute that's over. And whatever we had to store for the winter, or for a longer period of time, we stored there. Then we didn't have beds. Our mattresses were on the floor.

SIGRIST: What were the mattresses made out of?

ZOGBY: Uh, they were probably stuffed with wool. They were stuffed with wool, and they were just about that thick, and they were right on the floor, and they were very comfortable.

SIGRIST: For the sake of the tape, you're pointing to, what, about six inches?

ZOGBY: Just about, just about. Maybe four or six, it depends. And, uh, then we didn't, we had blankets, not blankets, but comforters that we covered ourselves with. In the wintertime we did not have nothing but the fireplace to keep the house warm, but, of course, that country is never -- was never too cold for any more than that. We didn't have heating systems like we do, today they do but, you know, very seldom use them.

SIGRIST: What was the exterior of the house made out of?

ZOGBY: Oh, uh, stones, cut stones.

SIGRIST: Now, was that a local industry also, the stones?

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ZOGBY: Yeah. Whenever you wanted to build a house there was always stones around the mountain there, and somebody was always there to cut them, the measurement. And they were all stone walls.

SIGRIST: And, uh, one story houses.

ZOGBY: Yeah. Mostly one story. Some people had two stories. Today in Lebanon you'll find ten, twelve, fifteen stories, which I never used to see. Heh.

SIGRIST: What about the roof on the house?

ZOGBY: The roof was most always flat, and if it wasn't flat, it would have that red, uh, tile on top. Uh, people who were better off financially had homes with the red tile roof.

SIGRIST: Was that a local industry also? Was the tile made . . .

ZOGBY: No. The red tiles came from, uh, Europe.

SIGRIST: So that's why the more affluent people had them.

ZOGBY: Yeah, that's right. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: What about the floor? Was the floor dirt, or . . .

ZOGBY: Uh, the floor was made of dirt, but it was covered with a thick substance that made it shiny. It was a mixture of certain, well, clay dirt and ashes, and they made a very shiny floor. Of course, you had to know how to do it. I probably couldn't do it myself.

SIGRIST: Tell me some of the, um, like the everyday household chores that your

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mother might have performed. For instance, the laundry. How did your mother do the laundry?

ZOGBY: Uh, they had a tub, and a board.

SIGRIST: Where did the water come from?

ZOGBY: Oh, uh, we had water, not coming to the house, but the town had a spring, and they had a container, a jug, that held probably five gallons. They'd go to the spring, fill it up, and bring it in.

SIGRIST: Now, who would do that? Would that be a job for one of the children, or for your mother?

ZOGBY: That would be, that would be a job for the ladies.

SIGRIST: And how . . .

ZOGBY: Because they used to love to go gather around that spring and gossip. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: So it was not only performing a function, but it was also sort of a social gathering.

ZOGBY: It was. It really was. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Now, was there a way that your mother would carry this earthen jug some, I mean, what, there must have been a technique for it.

ZOGBY: It depends, it depends. Either put it on their shoulder, and it had like a, like an ear or something to hang it, to hold it up with, or some women were a

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little bit, uh, they put it on their head and walk. (he laughs)

END SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

SIGRIST: What about animals? Did you keep animals?

ZOGBY: Uh, yeah, not too many. Mostly sheep for slaughtering. Uh, there would also be a few houses around the town that kept goats, and very few cows. Well, they used cows and, uh, the male animal of the cow, the bulls, more for plowing the land than they did for anything else. We very seldom ate beef or cow meat, very seldom.

SIGRIST: You said you had lamb to eat.

ZOGBY: Yes.

SIGRIST: Did you eat the goat, too?

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah, the goat, too. They had a goat. But we -- they raised goats more for their milk than for their . . .

SIGRIST: And what would they do with the milk?

ZOGBY: Oh, make, uh, cheese, and yogurt, and all that stuff.

SIGRIST: How did they make yogurt? When you were a kid growing up, how did they make yogurt?

ZOGBY: Well, you -- you take the milk when it's just plain lukewarm, and you put the rennet in there and mix it. Now, here we buy rennet from this place. Over there when they slau-- slaughtered a newly born kid. (That's I don't mean a

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man – a boy.) (he laughs) I mean. I don't know why they call kids here, you know? A goat, a newly born goat. When they slaughter that, the stomach before that goat ate anything is what they get the, uh, rennet from. So they would put some of that rennet in it, and let it stand for just a little while, then get the liquid out, and you got the cheese.

SIGRIST: The yogurt.

ZOGBY: No, the cheese, not the yogurt. Now, yogurt, you take that milk and you boil it, and then you let it cool to a certain temperature, and you put some of yesterday's or last week's yogurt in with it, and mix it and let it cool slowly. I have both here, if you'd like to see both of them. I'll show you.

SIGRIST: Yes, after.

ZOGBY: Before you leave.

SIGRIST: Uh, when you were a child, was there a household chore that was yours to perform?

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah. My household chore was I had to attend to the lambs, the sheep, and, uh, I had to go and weed the, uh, garden, wherever we planted something. Wild weed grow, have to go pick them up. And whenever Mother told me to do. If I didn't do it, she'd say, "Wait till your father comes home." (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Some things never change.

ZOGBY: I don't ever remember her spanking me, nor my father, but just, "Wait till your father comes home." That was more than enough. In other words, we were born with respect for our elders, which is a lost art today any more.

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(he laughs)

SIGRIST: Tell me about going to school. Did you go to school?

ZOGBY: Before the war started (of course, it started there in 1914, I was born in 1908) I was a six-year-old boy. So we went to school, and the teacher was the priest of the church. We couldn't afford a teacher, but the priest's function was to have a school and teach us. So I learned how to read and write.

SIGRIST: In what language?

ZOGBY: In the Lebanese Arabic language, the Arabic language. Then, of course, I learn enough that -- I tell you a cute little story that happened. My uncle, my father's brother, had a son who was here and every now and then he wanted to write a letter to his son. He'd call me. He'd say, uh, "Write to my son." Dear son, this and that. As he dictated to me, I wrote it. When I came here several years later, his son showed me some of the letters that I had written for his father when I was six years old. So, all right. Then schools closed during the war.

SIGRIST: When World War One started.

ZOGBY: Yeah. They closed, and we had no school. So in 1920 they reopened.

SIGRIST: So that's a good chunk of time that the schools were closed. What kind of education, if any, did you receive in that span of time?

ZOGBY: In the span of time, hardly anything, hardly anything. There was no -- just listen to our parents, and do whatever they want us to do, and . . .

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SIGRIST: Could your mother read and write?

ZOGBY: Uh, very little, very little. My father could, but my mother very little. So when they opened up the schools in 1920, we went back to school, and by the time the school year 1923 ended, sometimes around this time of the year, we came here.

SIGRIST: After the war, were the Allies any kind of presence in Lebanon?

ZOGBY: After the war, uh, the League of Nations had divided the, the Ottoman Empire among the victors. Not as owners, not like colon-- colonialism, but to take these countries and educate them to self government. Lebanon was given to the French, and the French opened up the schools.

SIGRIST: Yeah, this is what I was getting at, what country took over the education.

ZOGBY: Yeah. The French opened up the schools, and they taught us two languages, both Arabic and French. Of course, since I've been here for over seventy years, I've forgotten my French. Because there's nobody to talk to, which is something I regret. I still remember some French. I remember their grammar more than I do the words, you know? So, anyway, we went to school for three years. We had a French teacher who, uh, was with the French army and he was released from the army in Lebanon. When he decided the coun-- he loved the country so much he decided he'd stay. (he laughs) So, he was . . .

SIGRIST: Is there anything else that you remember about the French occupation of Lebanon? For instance, the presence of the military, or how you felt about them being there?

ZOGBY: Uh, no. We welcomed them as liberators from what we've had before. The

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French military never interfered with anything, but the French government did run the Lebanese government at the time, and they were quite justified. We respected them, we welcomed them when they came.

SIGRIST: Do you remember when World War One ended? Do you remember finding out that that had happened?

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah, definitely.

SIGRIST: Was there some kind of celebration . . .

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah. Everybody's up in arms. "Hey-- we're -- we were free, we're free, we're free." Especially, well, here's o-- one thing that I remember. When the World War ended; up around our part of the country, the end came in Egypt first. The Allied Expeditionary Forc-- Forces came into North Africa, went to Egypt, then crossed the canal, or the Red Sea there, went into Palestine, and came all the way up from Palestine to Lebanon, to Syria, to Iraq. They took over. Now, I do distinctly remember that when they were coming under a -- a British general, General Allenby], the Turks were running away, and they were following them. They weren't shooting on them any more, because they knew that just let them go. I remember the train going by the valley there where we were at the time. Uh, so many Turkish soldiers didn't have room to get inside these shipping cars. They didn't have procedure or anything. They were up on top of those cars, lying down, doing this, every now and then one of them falls. I remember seeing all that. And they kept right on going. And then a little while later the Allies came.

SIGRIST: And that's when you felt things . . .

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah. That's when we felt, when they were, when they were coming,

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when the Turkish army was running away, they told us. Of course, what did I know, you know? They told us the Turks were running away. Well, that's good. We'd look at 'em, we see that train going by, I don't know how many cars were there, riding all over the place.

SIGRIST: Great. Before we get you out of Lebanon, there's just one more question I want to ask you, and that's what you remember about the religious life in Lebanon. You said there were two churches in town.

ZOGBY: There were three. I didn't finish telling you about the third one. The third one was, uh, really a place that wasn't, uh, it wasn't a convent. It was a monastery. Oh, I'm sorry. And, uh, this, the owners of that, that certain sect of a religion, that the Melchite religion, if you're familiar with St. Basil's? They belong to the same sect.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the sect?

ZOGBY: Over here, well, it's the Melchite.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

ZOGBY: M-E-L-C-H-I-T-E.

SIGRIST: And this is a sect of, of, uh . . .

ZOGBY: This is a religion.

SIGRIST: Is it Catholicism, or . . .

ZOGBY: This is an oriental rite of the Catholic church, one of the oriental rites of the Catholic church. Here we have one church that belongs to that rite, St.

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Basil. So that place belonged to them, and they had a lot of land around it. And on that land they had several, well, maybe three or four houses, that they had people living in it, sharing the crops. So that's the third church that we had there. And that was St., uh, St. Midri[ph].

SIGRIST: Mitery[ph]?

ZOGBY: Midri[ph]. So, anyway, when it was that day, I don't remember what time, when that was, the town celebrated with them.

SIGRIST: Now, you were a member of St. Elias Church?

ZOGBY: No. No, no. It's, uh, I was, the, uh, Lady of Lebanon, you know, St. Mary's. St. Mary's church is our church.

SIGRIST: And, uh, which sect is this? Is this . . .

ZOGBY: The Maronite.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

ZOGBY: Which is predominant, predominant rite of the Catholic church in the Middle East is the Maronite rite. That's named after St. Maron, who lived in the fifth century. And it's the Maronite, M-A-R-O-N-I-T-E.

SIGRIST: Can you explain to me a little bit about how you practiced your religion in Lebanon?

ZOGBY: The same as you practice in the Catholic religion anywheres.

SIGRIST: How often would you go to church?

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ZOGBY: Well, it was a must to be there on Sunday and on holidays that are considered a holy day in the church.

SIGRIST: Which holiday, um, was the most important celebration in the church calendar?

ZOGBY: Uh, St. Maron's day, the day of the person who the church was named after.

SIGRIST: Can you explain to me a little bit about what that celebration entailed?

ZOGBY: Well, nothing too much, except that we went to church and, uh, we'd have, uh, goodie, pass them around in front of the church. As a kid, you know, as a child, what else do you want? So I can't really say.

SIGRIST: How would you practice your religion at home?

ZOGBY: Well, we said our prayers when we got up in the morning, and we said our prayers before we sat down to eat, just a Hail Mary and Our Father. And sit down, and that was our, uh, during Lent we didn't eat until noon. You could never go to receive Communion unless you went to Confession, which is a thing of the past today.

SIGRIST: Who was more religious, your mother or your father?

ZOGBY: Well, I don't remember my father's complete, but my mother was very religious.

SIGRIST: Is there a prayer in Arabic that she taught you that you still remember?

ZOGBY: No, no, no. Just the Our Father and the Hail Mary.

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SIGRIST: But did you say those in Arabic, or . . .

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah, in Arabic.

SIGRIST: Can you still say it in Arabic?

ZOGBY: Well, to an extent. Do you want to hear it?

SIGRIST: Would you do a little bit on the tape slowly for us, please?

ZOGBY: Okay. Now, this is the. . .

SIGRIST: Which one?

ZOGBY: This is the Our Father.

SIGRIST: Okay.

ZOGBY: [he prays in Arabic]

ZOGBY: *Abana alathie fi asamawat, li yatakadas ismok, li ya'atie malakotok, litakon mashia tok, kama fisama' kathaleka ala al ard. A'atinia khubzana kafafa yawmina, wa igfer lana khatayana kama nahnu la man akhta'a elayna, naghfer wa la tudkhilna fit a jareeb; laken najjina min ashireer. Amin*
[Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done in heaven as well as on earth give us bread for our life today and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one].
That's half of it.

SIGRIST: Thank you.

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ZOGBY: Now the Hail Mary?

SIGRIST: Sure, if you can do it.

ZOGBY: *Assalamu 'alayki ya maryam ya mumtalia
ni'matan arrabu ma'ki mubarakaton anti
bayna nissa wa mubarakon samratu batniki
sayidina yasu' I masih.* [Hail Mary, full of
grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art
thou among women, and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb--]. That's half of it.

SIGRIST: (he laughs) Thanks you. All right. Well, let's get you out of Lebanon.

ZOGBY: All right.

SIGRIST: You said your brother went before you. What year did he leave?

ZOGBY: 1910.

SIGRIST: Okay. Um, so that's actually before your father died, right?

ZOGBY: Yes.

SIGRIST: And where did he go when he came to the U.S.?

ZOGBY: Utica, New York.

SIGRIST: Why did he go to Utica?

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ZOGBY: We had relatives here, and there were several others from the same town or the surrounding town who will come in Utica, and they all came together.

SIGRIST: Was there a large Lebanese population in Utica at that time?

ZOGBY: Yeah, there was quite a population. I can't tell you how many there was then, but I know there was quite a Lebanese population.

SIGRIST: How old was your brother when he came?

ZOGBY: Uh, when he came he -- fourteen.

SIGRIST: And when he got to Lebano -- to Lebanon! When he got to Utica, what did he do? What profession did he . . .

ZOGBY: Uh, they worked in some of the knitting mills. I'm not sure which one at first. Then he went in partnership with two others and opened up a store on South Street, uh, 617 South Street. You know where the Stanhorst [ph] Apartments are in Utica? Right across the street. There's an ice cream factory afterwards. He, they opened up a grocery store there. Then they expanded into three stores, the three partners. Instead of staying in one place, they opened up a store on Park Avenue, right across from the fire station, and they opened up a store on, uh, Whitesboro Street, corner Jason.

SIGRIST: And, uh, when he first got here in 1910, was he writing back to the family and . . .

ZOGBY: Oh, yes. Yeah. But it used to take a month for a letter to get there.

SIGRIST: And what was he telling you? Do you remember?

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ZOGBY: Well, just, uh, that I'm doing good, and, uh, don't worry about me and, uh, I hope you're doing well, and keep in touch with me.

SIGRIST: Now, because, at that time, you know, your family is making a decent living. Was he sending money to you from America, or . . .

ZOGBY: At the beginning no. After the war, yes.

SIGRIST: So there was still communication with him after the war started.

ZOGBY: Yeah. The communication was cut between 1915. I don't think he knew that my father passed away until after the war, because there was no communication.

SIGRIST: So there was at least a year there where he was still communicating with you.

ZOGBY: Yeah, right.

SIGRIST: When you were a little boy in Lebanon, what did you know about America? I mean, how did you perceive America?

ZOGBY: I didn't. I didn't. I had no conception whatsoever.

SIGRIST: Um, so the war is over, and, um, who decided? Did your mother decide that she just needed to get you all out of there?

ZOGBY: Well, when my brother kept on writing, he was receiving answers from my second older brother, who was just under him in age. They explained everything to each other, and then they decided it would be a good idea if

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we all came. So my oldest brother made arrangements and, uh, sent us the tickets on the ship, and he sent us the necessary papers and told us what we were supposed to do. Incidentally, my second older brother came about three or four months before we did.

SIGRIST: And which one is that?

ZOGBY: That's Joseph.

SIGRIST: Yusef?

ZOGBY: Yusef, yeah, Joseph. He came a few months before we did. And then after he got here, because my brother who was here had no idea of exactly what to do there, so between him and my brother that came second, they decided what should be done and they wrote us if we'd like to come. So finally the last thing that happened after we -- writing to each other back and forth, I wasn't involved on the writing, I was just a bystander. The youngest in the family, no word, whatever they did I would, you know? I mean, you're a member your family. So the last thing that, uh, happened, was, uh, we told him what was going on, so he sent us a cable, "Sail immediately." And we went down, we had to go to Beirut where there was an American consul. We had to show them what papers we had, and we had to take a physical. Uh . . .

SIGRIST: Do you remember what they were checking for when you . . .

ZOGBY: They were checking for two things in particular. Uh, syphilis or gonorrhoea, and, uh, trachoma of the eyes. Those two things were very important. I had to wear glasses. I never wore glasses before. I never realized that I was nearsighted. (he laughs) I never knew it. You know, you see everything natural the way you always did, you think that's the way it is. So

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the doctor prescribed glasses, and we all passed the physical fine, except for my eyes, but once I got glasses. There was no disease or anything. There were just, uh, that I was nearsighted.

SIGRIST: Now, did you go back to your hometown to get ready to leave or just . . .

ZOGBY: Yes, yeah. We went down once, and when we got the report that we were fine, we came back to Beirut.

SIGRIST: You know, I should ask you, that first trip to Beirut that you went down to get your physical and deal with the papers, is that the first time you'd ever seen a big city?

ZOGBY: That was the first time I'd ever seen a big city.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what your impressions were of Beirut?

ZOGBY: Not really, not really, because I didn't care. I was just with my family, so I was just home.

ZOGBY: Just going along with it.

SIGRIST: I was just home. Wherever they were, I was there.

SIGRIST: Uh, do you remember being photographed for a passport.

ZOGBY: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Was that the first time you had been photographed?

ZOGBY: Yes, it was.

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SIGRIST: Do you remember anything about that experience that stuck out in your mind?

ZOGBY: Uh, not really. Listen, you want to take this off, I'll show you a picture, if I can find it.

SIGRIST: Well, we can look afterwards, yeah.

ZOGBY: Okay, all right.

SIGRIST: Um, all right. So you went back to your home town, and then how long was it before you eventually left?

ZOGBY: Uh, not too long. Probably, we left, we left Beirut August 1st, and we were there just before, maybe by the 10th or 12th of July the first time, see. And then we got the word, and we came to Beirut August 1st.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about what you took with you when you left your house for that last time?

ZOGBY: Uh . . .

SIGRIST: What kind of luggage did you take, if any?

ZOGBY: I was always interested in reading. So I brought two books with me. I figured I'd read them on the way. (he laughs) And I carried some of the merchandise that Mother packed up for us to come and --

SIGRIST: Do you remember what the books were?

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ZOGBY: Uh, yes and no. Not too long ago, I was thinking about it. One of the books wer-- had poetry that my schoolteacher in Lebanon had written himself. He was a poet. He was a famous poet, my schoolteacher, in Arabic. And that was one of the books that I – I wanted to bring. I don't remember what the other one was.

SIGRIST: Um, when you got to Beirut, oh, you mentioned saying goodbye to your grandmother. Is there anything else you remember about actually leaving the town?

ZOGBY: Yes, I do. I remember that, uh, we lived on this end of the town, and we're walking like to go, you see, we had to take an automobile that was among the first automobiles that were there. At that time, 1923, we didn't have too many cars. So there was one fellow that had a taxi, but we did not have an automobile road in our town. We had to walk quite a distance. So we walked from the beginning of town to the end, and now we're going to walk another mile or so. As we walked along, everybody in the town left their homes and followed us. By the time we got to the taxi, there must have been, between our town and the two towns that we passed through, there must have been about a hundred and fifty people that were following us to let us go by. They knew we weren't coming back, and they hated to see us leave. So that's what I remember, till we got in the taxi.

SIGRIST: Do you remember how you felt about getting in an automobile? I mean . . .

ZOGBY: Well, no. I didn't . . .

SIGRIST: Was that exciting for you, or . . .

ZOGBY: It didn't really make, it didn't really make any difference. What – what -- we had ridden in a horse and buggy, and this was easier.

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SIGRIST: So you arrived in Beirut. How long did you have to stay in Beirut before you got on the ship?

ZOGBY: Uh, about two days.

SIGRIST: And, um . . .

ZOGBY: We had friends that we stayed with.

SIGRIST: Friends of the family.

ZOGBY: Yeah. Some of, relatives.

SIGRIST: And, um, was this the big ship that went to America, or was this a smaller ship that went somewhere else?

ZOGBY: No, I'll tell you about the ship. It was a French ship called Braga.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

ZOGBY: B-R-A-G-A. And it belonged to a French company called The Fabre Line, F-A-B-R-E. And, uh, it left Beirut and went to Java, in Palestine, at the time. There was no Israel. Then it went from Java to Alexandria, Egypt. Then it turned around and went to Izmit, in Turkey. Then it went through the Dardanelle till it got into Constantinople or Istanbul, today they call it. Then it went into the, uh, Sea of Mamura. Then it crossed to Constanza, Rumania, where they boarded a lot of passengers. Then when we came back from Constanza, we stopped at Istanbul again. They took us off the ship, and fumigated us. They took all our clothes off, and put them in something that smelled like sulphur. Then we got dressed again, got back

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on the ship, and came back through the Dardanelle to a place in Greece called Pyra[ph]. I think they called it Piraeus or something like that, but at the time they said it was Pary[ph], 'cause being French and all -- they have the French pronunciation.

Then we came from there to Napoli, Italy. In Napoli, we stayed on the ship, but the ship stayed there two nights besides the day. One of my brothers got off and toured Napoli and came back on again, but I wasn't interested in that. I was interested in getting here. So we left Napoli, and we cross the Mediterranean to Morocco. Then from Morocco we came into the Atlantic through the Strait of Gibraltar. Uh, it stopped somewheres before Gibraltar. I'm not sure whether it's called Corsica or Sardinia, one of those islands. It stopped there at night, late in the day, and left early in the morning. No passengers ever got on. So, anyway, when we got out of there, it made one more short stop in Portugal, and then it took us sixteen days across the Atlantic. Most of those sixteen days, no land whatsoever, till we got to New York.

We got to New York and the boat docked, and we stayed six days before we could get off the boat, wondered why. Asked, nobody had the question. Everything was guesswork. The ship violated something. The ship violated something. What did they violate? Nobody knew. I didn't. But I did hear afterwards that that last stop, either Corsica or Sardinia, wherever it was, they loaded some wine, and it was prohibition days. And so before they got to New York, they got rid of the wine. The last ten days, at lunch they used to give every two passengers a bottle of wine. At dinner, they -- every two passengers a bottle of wine. So I believed that they must have served them to the passengers instead of bringing them in during Prohibition. But somehow or another, the reve-- revenuers must have got wind of that. I don't know. I'm just guessing, everything that we heard about. (he laughs)

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SIGRIST: How long did it take from the time you left Beirut to the time you docked in New York?

ZOGBY: Thirty-one days.

SIGRIST: I mean, that's, you really went the scenic route.

ZOGBY: That's right. Incidentally, that same ship, the following year to the day, it sank in the Dardanelle. It hit a mine one year later.

SIGRIST: Tell me, this is the first time you've been on a ship, I assume.

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me what the experience was like. What sticks out in your mind about being on that ship? Is there . . .

ZOGBY: It never bothered me at all. My pleasure was always standing at the railing and watching the, uh, fish trying to catch up with the ship, because, you know, the ship always, uh, throws food away or something, and apparently these fishes must know that there's something coming, they're going to have food. I used to watch them, they used to come and run and catch something and run away again. I spent a lot of time doing that.

SIGRIST: Where did you sleep on the ship?

ZOGBY: Oh, we had, uh, cots, uh, like two, three of each other, you climb up to the top or down under. That's how they were.

SIGRIST: Was this one large room with lots of people in it, or were these individual

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cabins?

ZOGBY: No. No, no, no, no, no. Each, each cabin had three cots and three cots. Those are the cabins that I saw. Maybe others had more, maybe they had less, I don't know. But where I was there were six of us. Three on, one each.

SIGRIST: So your whole family is together?

ZOGBY: Yeah, yeah. We were together.

SIGRIST: Um, I think we're going to just pause for a moment, and I'm going to stick in another tape, and we'll get you on to America.

ZOGBY: Oh, boy.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

SIGRIST: All right. We're now beginning Tape Two with Wadih Zogby, who came from Lebanon in 1923 at the age of fifteen, and it's Friday, July 8, 1994. This is Paul Sigrist, and Bob Jones is also in attendance. Mr. Zogby, you just told us this elaborate itinerary of where the ship went prior to coming to America. When you were on the ship during all of those stops in these rather exotic places, is there anything that you remember seeing in any of these ports that you had never seen before that was really unusual to you in some way?

ZOGBY: Well, I don't really remember anything in particular, but I do know that everything that I've seen was different than the environment that I had lived in up until that time. Uh, when I was in Beirut, which was a big city, it was one story, but I didn't see much of it. But when we came in on the boat and

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started landing here and there I'd see these buildings and these, uh, lights and what have you. They weren't too familiar to me, but they didn't strike me, because all I was interested in was my destination.

SIGRIST: Did, um, did anyone get sick on the ship?

ZOGBY: Uh, not any of our people.

SIGRIST: Your family was all okay.

ZOGBY: My family was fine. No seasickness or anything.

SIGRIST: Do you remember where they fed you on the ship?

ZOGBY: Uh, yes. They had, uh, they had animals on the ship that they used to slaughter, and they gave us either ground meat or steaks that were small, and, as you know, when an animal is newly slaughtered, the meat is not that tender, so I do remember that. And, naturally, they gave us potatoes and rice and other things with it. Uh, French bread all the time and, like I said, on the Atlantic, they started giving us a bottle of wine for every two passengers. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Were there a lot of, um, you may not remember this, but were there a lot of people who were going to America with the intention of staying there? Were there lots of people who were emigrating from their countries?

ZOGBY: At the time, yes. Uh, previous to that, Lebanese who emigrated to America had an idea that they would come here, work and save their money, and go back in five years. But after that first World War, and the suffering that happened back home, nobody wanted to go back if they could help it. They all had love for their original country, but they did not want to go back and

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suffer there. They just had that picture behind them, so they would come in here to see if there was a way they can stay. And, of course, immigration at that time was wide open. It wasn't like it is today. Uh, as long as you passed physically and what have you, you could come here. A lot of people got on the ship from Palestine, mostly from the Jewish population that was in Palestine. I don't remember any Palestinians other than the Jewish population. An awful lot of people got on in Constanza, Roumania, an awful lot of people came on. And they had intentions of staying here. We couldn't understand them unless, I spoke French, and so they did, some of them did. So that was the only way that, uh, we could understand each other. The Palestinians we could, because they spoke Arabic, but others we couldn't.

SIGRIST: Were there other children on the ship, that you remember?

ZOGBY: Not many, not many.

SIGRIST: Did the ship have different classes, traveling classes?

ZOGBY: No, no, it didn't. No, it was, this was one touring ship.

SIGRIST: So pretty much everyone there was in the same financial situation.

ZOGBY: Yeah. Dining time, we were all in the dining room.

SIGRIST: Do you, um, do you remember there being any kind of safety drills that you had to go through?

ZOGBY: No, no, we didn't, no. But, of course, in our cabins there were things there that they told us to wear them in case anything happens. But if it happened in the middle of the Atlantic . . . (he laughs)

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SIGRIST: Just tread water for a long time.

ZOGBY: Yeah. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: So the ship docks in New York, and you had to stay on the ship for six days.

ZOGBY: Yeah. Let me tell you something. Before we got to New York, somewhere around four or five days before we got to New York, there was no land in sight. And we, the ship, we heard the ship whistle go on. Then we were told that there was an S.O.S., because far, far away, they kept on seeing something come up and go down in the water. They didn't know whether it was a whale or a submarine, from a distance. So they sent an S.O.S. And that lasted for about two hours. Then after two hours we saw nothing. We still don't know what it was, whether it was a submarine left over from the war or, you know. So now we got to New York.

SIGRIST: So you get to New York. Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty when you came into New York?

ZOGBY: Oh, yes, yes.

SIGRIST: Did you know what that was?

ZOGBY: Yes. It was explained to us before we left. And we knew we were going to go, pass through Ellis Island, but we stayed on the ship six days before we finally got to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: How did they take you to Ellis Island?

ZOGBY: Well, from a boat, a small boat on the ship to Ellis Island, and then back on the boat, and then, then off the boat to the docks.

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SIGRIST: What do you remember about Ellis Island in that . . .

ZOGBY: Well, just standing in line, and there happened to be a man who had worked in Ellis Island, uh, who had, my brother had seen him, and he told him that we were coming, and so he came over and let us, and all they did was just plain stamp our papers. That's all that happened at Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: So you didn't have to undergo any medical exams?

ZOGBY: No, not at Ellis Island at all.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what it looked like?

ZOGBY: Not really, not really, no. Just the, uh, path that we took, and followed everybody else. You're looking at 50 people ahead of you, 100 people behind you, or vice versa, you don't look at anything else. Especially me, I wasn't, you know, I was just with my family.

SIGRIST: And, um, did your brother come to Ellis Island to meet you?

ZOGBY: No. My brother -- while the ship was docked; he and another fellow (whose brother was on the ship with us) that lived in Utica -- down in New York. And when they found out that we weren't going to be off the ship, every day they used to take a boat and go by the ship and call for us, and they would call for us, and they'd stand on the boat, and we'd look down on him and have a conversation with him, and they stayed there a little while, and then they'd come back the next day. That he did every day while we were there. Of course, when he left Utica, he thought he was going to come down and go back, but he didn't. He had to stay there. And this other fellow was a six-footer and, uh, he would be standing up, and my brother would say to

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him, "Would you please sit down so my mother could see me?" (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Well, he probably didn't know why you weren't being let off the ship.

ZOGBY: No, he didn't.

SIGRIST: As you didn't know.

ZOGBY: No. We didn't know, and he didn't know.

SIGRIST: I have to ask you this question. When the ship was docked and you were held in the ship.

ZOGBY: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: Was there any difference in the food that they fed you, or how you were treated when the boat was docked?

ZOGBY: No, no, there wasn't, there wasn't. I remember one little incident. Sometimes you remember little things, you know? While we were on the ship, and I'm looking over the railing on the dock. There was a fellow there with a cart. And I looked at him, and he looked up, and he started saying something in English that I didn't know what it was. So I said to him in Arabic, "What." Which is *aysh*. So he thought I wanted ice. So would you believe it, he went and got a small chunk of ice and threw it up to me. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: That's a good story, um, so you said you had to go back on the boat after you got off at Ellis Island.

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ZOGBY: Yeah. And then, then . . .

SIGRIST: How long were you at Ellis Island, do you think?

ZOGBY: Oh, a matter of a few hours.

SIGRIST: Did you eat while you were there?

ZOGBY: No. No, no, no, no.

SIGRIST: So you went . . .

ZOGBY: As we went, we stood in line. When our turn came, we got out. They sent us back to the ship, and the ship let us out.

SIGRIST: And, so is that when you finally hooked up with your brother.

ZOGBY: That's right.

SIGRIST: How did your mother react to seeing him again?

ZOGBY: Wha-- . . . (he laughs) What can I tell you? My mother, her lon-- long lost son. You know, not lost, but very anxious and everything.

SIGRIST: Did he look different to you somehow?

ZOGBY: Yes, he did. Well, he was fourteen when I remembered him, and he was, what, twenty-four or something when -- when I met him. There was a lot of difference.

SIGRIST: Did he look, um, American to you, to your eyes?

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ZOGBY: Uh, to an extent, yes. Because my brother had acquired a habit of getting a very short haircut, you know? Always cut his hair short. Well, I had never realized that before, see? A little bit longer, not too long but, you know, not that short. That's how he looked to me.

SIGRIST: So after you met your brother, um, did you stay in New York overnight?

ZOGBY: No, no.

SIGRIST: Before, you got right to the train?

ZOGBY: No, no. We got right to the train, and we got here, oh, sometimes early in the evening.

SIGRIST: Tell me about that experience of coming up to Utica. What did you see in New York that was . . .

ZOGBY: Hmm, not, just a taxi from the port to the railroad station, and, of course, Grand Central is always a sight to see. And Grand Central was so busy at that time. Not like today, if you haven't been to Grand Central today, you don't want to go the-- the derelicts and everything. (he laughs) So Grand Central was really a place to look at. It was really something. Then when we got on the train and came to Utica, we just kept on talking to each other. We never looked outside or anything. We got to Utica, would you believe it, there were over two hundred people to greet us, people who knew we were coming, and knew my brother while they were here and all that. The first non-Lebanese family that I met was a lady by the name of Purvis[ph]. Walter Purvis[ph] used to have office supply place down on lower Genesee Street. And his wife was a member of the Americanization Council. And, uh, that's the first person of non-Lebanese origin that I met. And she was

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such a lovely lady. The Americanization Council was formed so that new immigrants would come in, and they would take them in and show them the ways of America.

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did she show you?

ZOGBY: Well . . .

SIGRIST: What was it that . . .

ZOGBY: To go to school, and to learn and everything. I couldn't understand her anyway, but so she'd come in, she greeted us, and she welcomed us, and she showed us where to go to school. I went to night school for a little while here.

SIGRIST: How did you spend your first night in America?

ZOGBY: That I couldn't say.

SIGRIST: Where did you stay?

ZOGBY: Yeah, we had a house over here. We had a, my brother had . . .

SIGRIST: That's where your mother was living.

ZOGBY: Yeah. My brother had already rented a seven-room apartment.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the apartment a little bit for me? Seven rooms.

ZOGBY: Yeah. The building had six of those apartments, three on each side. It was a three-story building. Let me see. Three, yeah. Three on each side, it

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was a three story building. And, 609 Second Street. Right now it's a parking lot for the bakery there, the Wonder Bread. And as you went into the apartment, there was, there was a hallway. There was a kitchen and there was four bedrooms and a parlor, and a dining room -- a kitchen.

SIGRIST: Did, did the apartment have electricity?

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah. It was complete. It was complete.

SIGRIST: And, um, uh, tell me, uh, how soon it was that you started going to school?

ZOGBY: Well, we got here, uh, the first part of September school had already opened, so I didn't go to school until the end of the month. We went to Ruskil[ph], not Ruskil[ph] Conklin[ph]. I went to Brandiger[ph] School, where they had a class for grown up immigrants, to teach them the English.

SIGRIST: Oh, can you just talk about the class a little bit?

ZOGBY: Ev—yeah, everybody in that class was -- I probably was the youngest. All the others were older than I. And they were teaching them English and the alphabet. And, of course, I knew the alphabet, because I knew how to read and write French, and a lot of the words were familiar to me, but I didn't know how to put them together. And that's what they taught us, and, uh, Miss Bellaterre[ph] was our teacher. She was a nice lady.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the first word or phrase in English that you picked up?

ZOGBY: No, I really don't. No, I really don't.

SIGRIST: Uh, were there other, these weren't just Lebanese people in this class?

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ZOGBY: No. No, no, no, no. No, there was, mostly Italians, mostly from an Italian heritage.

SIGRIST: And all adults.

ZOGBY: Yeah, all were adults.

SIGRIST: How long did you attend the night school?

ZOGBY: Uh, we went, I went to night school, well, this was not night school, this was day school.

SIGRIST: Day school.

ZOGBY: Until the year ended. Then the following, before the year ended, they had Brandiger[ph]. Not Brandiger[ph], they had Ruskill[ph] Conklin[ph]. So I moved to Ruskill[ph] Conklin[ph] because it was more near where we lived, and, uh, I already could understand some English. So they put me in the fifth grade at Ruskill[ph] Conklin[ph]. (a telephone rings)

SIGRIST: Oh, we're going to pause just for a second. (break in tape) Okay. We're now resuming. So you then started night school at a different location.

ZOGBY: Yes. Well, no, we went to Brandiger[ph]. I finished the year there, then the following year we went to night school on Elizabeth Street.

SIGRIST: How was night school different than the day school that you had been to?

ZOGBY: Well, the night school was strictly devoted to people who came from overseas. We didn't have any children there that knew ten times as much but they were about half our age. Uh, at the other school, the kids would

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see us coming out and can't talk any English, they thought that we were retarded, and they tried to make fun of us, because they figured we're retarded. "Hey, there's a guy that's sixteen years old, can't talk, can't learn, what's he doing?" You know? So it's hard to put up with that, and you can't explain it to them. So finally when we went to night school, we were all about the same group, and knew what we were doing and everything. And that lasted for about a year, and that's the end of my education.

SIGRIST: Did, um, do you remember an instance where you were trying to speak English and you made a terrible mistake? I mean, you said something incorrectly, and . . .

ZOGBY: Uh, I don't remember an instance of that type. But I'll tell you what happened. We had the store up here on Oneida Street. And, uh, we used to have -- biggest share of our business was on the telephone and delivery and charge. That was the fashion those days. So I used to do the deliveries, and I went to these American homes. If I made a mistake, the people that I a made a mistake with were so kind, so good, "Mr. Zogby, that is not how to say it. You say it this way." And that's where I learned my English.

SIGRIST: Would you say that most people, um, were accepting of you as an immigrant, or did you experience a certain amount of prejudice because you were an immigrant?

ZOGBY: No. No, no, no, no. I didn't. I didn't. I didn't experience any prejudice, except from the little kids went I went to Conklin[ph] School.

SIGRIST: So that most, so that the native born population was generally very accepting, and helpful.

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ZOGBY: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me about how your mother adjusted to this country.

ZOGBY: Well, my mother lived here, oh, excuse me, I'm sorry. My, we came in 1923, and my mother died in 1956, and she really never learned any English to say so.

SIGRIST: Why do you think that is?

ZOGBY: Well, because the environment that she lived in, we always spoke to her in our own language, and all of our friends her age that used to come and visit with her spoke to her in that language, and we saw to it that she never needed anything, which probably was a mistake, but it helped her not to learn the language.

SIGRIST: Um, did your mother have a lot of friends?

ZOGBY: Oh, yes. Half the population of Lebanese origin were her friends.

SIGRIST: What were some of the things that your mother liked to do for entertainment in those early years?

ZOGBY: Well, uh, tell you that we always had company at home. And, uh, she would be very happy in setting up a table so that you could have a drink and hors d'ouvres and all this and that, and everything was ready.

SIGRIST: Who did the shopping in the house?

ZOGBY: Well, we had the store, and if my mother needed something my sisters, before they were married, they would take her to the store if she needed

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something that wasn't food or anything, clothing, or whatever she needed, they would take her. Otherwise some of our friends who were here before us, or born here, by that time, they would . . .

SIGRIST: That's right, because your brother had the grocery store by this time, so . . .

ZOGBY: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Um, so your mother, in a way, really didn't have to go out into the outside world.

ZOGBY: No, she didn't.

SIGRIST: What was the first job that you got when you came here?

ZOGBY: Me?

SIGRIST: The first paying job?

ZOGBY: Well, I never had a paying job.

SIGRIST: You went right into the grocery?

ZOGBY: I went into the grocery store, then I opened up my own place.

SIGRIST: How old were you when you opened up your own place?

ZOGBY: Oh, I, at the time, let me see, in 1935 how old would I have been? I was born in 1908.

SIGRIST: Born in 1908, thirty-five . . . Thirty, just in your late twenties.

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ZOGBY: We bought a bottling plant up in Boonesville.

SIGRIST: A bottling plant.

ZOGBY: Yeah, carbonated beverages. It wasn't my own, it was the family's, but I managed it.

SIGRIST: Um, when you were growing up, um, did you hang around mostly with Lebanese people, or did you have friends that were not Lebanese.

ZOGBY: Both. Both, both. When, whenever the occasion arised, I was there. I wanted to be. I wanted to mingle, and I still wanted to keep the heritage.

SIGRIST: Would you say that you made an effort to Americanize?

ZOGBY: Oh, it just came, natural. It just came natural.

SIGRIST: Were there, were there ways that you could, um, visibly become American, like maybe dressing differently, or you mentioned your brother's hair being cut very short?

ZOGBY: Well, no. There was nothing. We just, uh, fell right in, fell right in. And, yet, kept the heritage. Like today, if I hadn't kept the heritage, I wouldn't be talking to you. What would I be talking about, except what I brought with me from over there.

SIGRIST: Well, and, as you said, that a lot of Lebanese people, while they loved their country, realized that they were better off over here.

ZOGBY: Yeah, yeah.

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SIGRIST: Tell me about becoming a citizen. Did you become an American citizen?

ZOGBY: Yes, I did.

SIGRIST: What year was that?

ZOGBY: 1937.

SIGRIST: And, uh, tell me a little bit about the experience of becoming a citizen, what you had to go through.

ZOGBY: Uh, hardly any experience, to tell you the truth, because by that time I had been around and known and everything. And then, of course, Mrs. Purvis[ph] was, uh -- Alice Smith, who used to be in charge of the night schools in the city, well, they both encouraged me -- and Arthur Derbushire[ph] was another person. (he addresses Mr. Jones) Do you remember him? Uh, I figured you'd remember Art Derbushire[ph]. Derbushire[ph] place was named after him. He's a very fine man. Uh, I was surrounded by them. And, uh, they gave me some books to study and everything. Well, I read the book, and then one day I get a telephone call from the federal investigator. He'd like to talk to me. So I made an appointment, and he came. He put me in his car, took me around for a ride, had a long conversation. Then I got a notice that there before the judge at the county courthouse downtown, Judge Zoller, he was really from Little Falls.

SIGRIST: Zoller?

ZOGBY: Yeah, Zoller, Z-O-L-L-E-R. So for, a hearing for my citizenship. So I went with him, and when my name came this man from the federal government

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got up and he spoke to, about me to Judge Zoller, and as he was speaking, Judge Zoller didn't have too much patience. He said, "Okay, okay, I heard enough, I heard enough, I heard enough. Pass, pass, pass, pass." (he laughs) I'll never forget that. He said, "Pass, pass, pass." He said, "I heard enough." (he laughs) So he passed me. Then, of course, between Art Derbushire[ph] and Mrs. Purvis[ph] and Alice Smith, they gave us, uh, a reception at the Fountain Elms. Uh, somebody was going to speak to us from the federal government. Oh, a congressman from Whitesboro, what was his name? He was a congressman from Whitesboro, from around this area, but he lived in Whitesboro. Harkness[ph]. Never heard of him? Congressman Harkness[ph] was going to speak to us. And then they wanted somebody to speak in the name the new citizens, so they selected me.

SIGRIST: And what did you say? Do you remember what kind of thoughts you were trying to convey to them?

ZOGBY: Yes, I do. I remember, I don't remember the words, but I remember the thoughts that came that we're American by choice because we love America. If we were born here, we're Americans, we have no credit, not to our credit. (he laughs) But it's to our credit, because we chose to become Americans.

SIGRIST: How did it feel to become a citizen?

ZOGBY: I can be anything now except President of the United States. You have to be American born. (he laughs) But I don't have any ambition anyway. (he laughs) Not to be president. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: I guess one of my final questions to you is, um, is there something that your mother or your father instilled in you as a child that has carried you through

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your whole life, something that they tried to teach you that has carried you?

ZOGBY: Several things. Some of them, which is very important, the golden rule. Don't do unto others what you don't want others do unto you. Lying is a very bad thing, because when you lie once, that came to me from my father through my second oldest brother. If you lie once, you're going to find yourself lying twice to cover the first lie, then four times to cover the second two, so don't tell any lies. And be honest.

SIGRIST: Are you happy that you came to this country?

ZOGBY: Oh, sure I am, but I still have an attachment to Lebanon.

SIGRIST: Have you gone back to Lebanon?

ZOGBY: Oh, yeah. I've been – I've been doing this for several years.

SIGRIST: What was the first time you went back, what year?

ZOGBY: In '74.

SIGRIST: And what did it feel like to be back for that first time?

ZOGBY: Well, uh, things were different at that time, so I felt, I was glad to be back there and everything, and all was in peace and what have you. Then after I came back and the trouble started in Lebanon, I realized the hardship that some of these people were having. So I organized a group of people here to look after the orphanages, the handicaps, and the refugees, who through no fault of their own, they became victims. So I've been putting on a fund-raiser, and I take it every year and go pass it on these places where they're taking care of those people that need to be taken care of. After all,

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we give the world an awful lot of help. Why can't somebody who comes from a country that was so friendly to the United States, that was so pro-West, more pro-West than a lot of Western countries, and why can't we give them a little help when they need it, especially for those who found themselves victims through no – no fault of their own. So this is what I've been doing. I've ma-- I've made fourteen trips since then to Lebanon, and preparing to go next month.

SIGRIST: Well, I wish you a lot of luck.

ZOGBY: Yeah.

SIGRIST: That's great. Mr. Zogby, um, we need to move on to another interview, so I want to thank you very much for, for, uh, letting me interview you. You've been a wonderful interview.

ZOGBY: Thank you, sir. I hope you really liked it.

SIGRIST: Yeah, I did really like it. (they laugh) This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Wadih Zogby on Friday, July 8, 1994, with Bob Jones in attendance. Thanks.