

EI-556

CARMELLA ADARIO

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INTERVIEWER: CATHY NAUGHTON

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ITALY, 1919

RESIDENCE: GUARDIAGRELE

AGE 10

US RESIDENCE: CAMBRIDGE, MA

PASSAGE ON "THE PESARO"

PORT OF EMBARKATION: NAPLES

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NAUGHTON: Good afternoon. This is Cathy Naughton for the National Park Service. I am a student intern and bachelor's degree candidate from New York University's School of Continuing Education. Today is Saturday, October 8, 1994, and I'm in the recording studio of the Ellis Island Oral History Project with Carmella Adario, who came to America from Italy in 1919 when she was eleven years old. Welcome, Carmella Adario.

ADARIO: Welcome, Cathy.

NAUGHTON: Why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth, please?

ADARIO: Okay. My name is Carmella Adario, and I was born in January 14, 1909.

NAUGHTON: Where were you born?

ADARIO: I was born in Italy in the small town of Guardiagrele.

NAUGHTON: Could you spell the name of the town for me?

ADARIO: Yes. G-U-A-R-D-I-A-G-R-E-L-E.

NAUGHTON: Thank you. Tell me about the town.

ADARIO: The town was, all I remember is really one main street and a villa, which I remember playing in. And some of my friends went to Italy not very long ago and asked to bring back a card, you know, with that, uh, it was a beautiful place, if I remember it, at that age. And then there was a church and an alley, and we all lived in a room, you know, with five kids.

NAUGHTON: What was the major industry of the town?

ADARIO: The major what?

NAUGHTON: Industry.

ADARIO: Industry. (she laughs) Well, who knows.

NAUGHTON: Was it a farming town, or . . .

ADARIO: Oh, no, no. No, this was a regular, uh . . .

NAUGHTON: Industrial town.

ADARIO: A small town, you know. It just depended, you know.

We really suffered in the World War One because there was no food, no nothing, you know. You'd have a ticket to go get some rice which had maggots in it, and you picked them out. But I don't know how my mother managed to bring us up.

NAUGHTON: Tell me about your home and about your family life there.

ADARIO: Um, my mother had a little store that she made, uh, girdles. And then during the war they, uh, they made some kind of shoes out of the inside of, uh, automobile tires. It used to be like a texture there, you know, and they, you put, uh, lacing around it and you tied, I guess the farmers, I don't know who used to wear them, the farmers. And that's how

she eked out the little bit of living. Because my father had left in 1914 and, uh, she was pregnant with, uh, my brother. And he was born ten days after my father left. He was still in the ocean. And, uh, she had had seven children, seven female children, and this one was a boy. I guess it was very hard for my father to believe that it was a real boy. So then after five years, after the war, my father sent for us, and we proceeded to, whatever went on, you know.

I was too young to really be involved in that. And we left our home town some time in October 1914, arrived, we had never seen a bus before. A bus took us from the town to Naples where the ship was supposed to be in port, and it wasn't there, and it wasn't there. So we, they put us up in a hotel for a whole month, so we were there until November. And then finally the ship came after a month.

NAUGHTON: I'm going to take you back for a minute and ask you if you can describe your mother for me. What was she like, her personality?

ADARIO: Her personality, I think, as I see myself now, in my age, although she died young, she died when she was sixty-nine, I feel that I'm more like her than any

one of my other sisters. Uh, dressmaker, uh, she was, she was just wonderful. People used to come into the little store and say, "Is your mother home?"

So she must have looked young, because your mother never looks young to you, you know. So she was really a great person.

NAUGHTON: And she must have missed your father very much when he left.

ADARIO: Oh, it was terrible. I can remember her crying buckets of tears. It was just terrible, yeah. But now, as I think back, he must have been avoiding the, uh, the draft.

NAUGHTON: I was going to ask you if you could tell me a little bit about why your father left.

ADARIO: I think, I'm guessing, you know, as you grow older, you sort of put two and two together, you know, and hope you're right. But it had to be to dodge the draft.

NAUGHTON: What did your father do when he came, when he got to America?

ADARIO: He, in Italy he was, uh, made wooden tubs, and also

he was a musician. He played the flute. And I think that was really his love. As far as I can think, my father must have been one of the first beatniks. I, he should never have been married or have kids, you know? He was a free spirit. Now I see it that way, but not then.

NAUGHTON: So who made the decision in your family, then, to bring yourself and your sisters and your brother?

ADARIO: Oh, my father wanted us to come over, yeah.

NAUGHTON: Okay.

ADARIO: We arrived in East Cambridge on Second Street, which the house is not there any more. We arrived and, uh, it was freezing. The pipes were broken. There was ice on the floor. We had never seen anything like it, you know? Because we thought it was a palace, because we didn't, we didn't live in the, we lived in the, I don't know, like one room, you know, five in a bed type thing in Italy. So this was quite nice. And he had a little store with picture frames and, you know, stuff like that.

NAUGHTON: Can you tell me about the preparation for your

journey from Italy? Do you remember packing any things that, special mementos you took?

ADARIO: No, nothing like that. We didn't have anything. We didn't. As a matter of fact, we came with just a dress, and my father, you know, we saw all the other people coming to get their families from the ship, they'd bring clothes, you know, to their kids or their wife. We came, I don't know how we didn't freeze to death. From New York to Boston with just a dress. We didn't bring us anything. And, uh, it was not a happy time for my mother.

NAUGHTON: Now, you got to Naples and you waited in a hotel for your ship.

ADARIO: Uh-huh.

NAUGHTON: And, uh, when did you depart at last?

ADARIO: About a month, I don't remember exactly the date, but it was a month.

NAUGHTON: Do you remember the year?

ADARIO: Yes, '18, 1918.

NAUGHTON: Okay. Do you remember the name of the ship that you

sailed on?

ADARIO: Yes. The name of the ship was Pesaro, P-E-S-A-R-O. And, uh, then we were on, on the ocean for thirty-one days. Uh, one thing, we stopped at Rock of Gibraltar for a week, and that was one week. Then, uh, on Christmas Eve we were, we traveled steerage, you know, down in the dungeon. We had, uh, life things for, uh, pillows, all in a row, you know, like barracks. And, uh, we, and Christmas Eve the, all the lights went out. We were locked, couldn't get out from where we were, we were in steerage, and they all said the ship was sinking, you know, so that was not too pleasant. Something happened.

NAUGHTON: Were you ever allowed up on deck of the ship?

ADARIO: Uh, yeah. We, it was roped off, but no one was, everybody was deathly sick, seasick. My mother thought we were going to, she was going to die, you know, and all the others. Except my older sister and I didn't get seasick for some reason or other. And, uh, so we arrived in New York on January 7th, 1919. And waited, and waited for my father to come and pick us up. He didn't come, he didn't come, so we came

the next day. It was questioned whether we were going to get off that ship or not, or we were going to turn back.

NAUGHTON: On the ship, do you have any memories of any of the persons who traveled with you?

ADARIO: Yes. We were traveling with a family that previously had tried to come on the Lusitania that sunk. And they were on lifeboats five days. And also when they slid down ropes from the ship to save themselves, and they had scars on their hands, you know? So the night that we thought we were sinking, they, it wasn't too happy for them. They were hysterical. The whole place was hysterical. And the doors all locked, we couldn't get out, you know, from. And I understand it's because they didn't have enough lifeboats for everybody. That may be a rumor, but I'm not sure.

NAUGHTON: Do you have any special memories of any of the, of the smells and the sounds, the sights, other sights that you heard while on board the ship?

ADARIO: That we all, we can't remember, and I hate Campbell's soup for that. (she laughs) My father said when

he came to see the ship, the ship, on the side of the ship was just all crud from food that was thrown overboard and stuck on the ship. Can you believe such a thing? I didn't see any of that, you know. But the smell of Campbell's soup was out of this world. (she laughs) After being used to Italian food.

NAUGHTON: Was that the first time that you had had Campbell's soup on board the ship?

ADARIO: Oh, we never ate it, because it was terrible. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: Were there any other foods that you had experienced for the very first time, from America, on board?

ADARIO: Bananas, bananas. It was, and I love bananas now, but the texture of bananas in your mouth, you just have no idea, can't explain it. It would make you sick, you know? You just, you're used to eating crunchy food, you know, like, uh, I don't know if that's the reason why we all had good teeth, you know. My first cavity was when I was eighty-three and I thought it was the end of the world. (she laughs) So, but, uh, we never had sweets. We

didn't have food. To have a piece of bread was really something during the war.

NAUGHTON: Was your mother able to bring any food with her at all for the journey? Was she able to make anything to bring?

ADARIO: No. I remember, uh, why I say I'm like her. She, she took charge of buying the food when we were in a hotel. She'd go and bargain, you know, and stuff like that. And in Naples, you know, there are really quite a lot of crooks. And she knew how, she dealt with that. And, uh, she managed, they would cook and, I don't know what the setup was, but, uh, they just had us in this great big room, all the people that were going. Some people went home that could, you know, and then came back. I remember that.

NAUGHTON: When you say that there were a lot of crooks in Naples, do you mean that they would take advantage of immigrant families?

ADARIO: Of course, of course. Even now, you know? It's always . . .

NAUGHTON: But was that more a reason because of the war that

was taking place?

ADARIO: It's possible. That's possible, yeah. A lot of it I didn't understand. But, uh, she managed to take care of things, you know?

NAUGHTON: And how many of you, with your mother, that made the journey, came over?

ADARIO: Five. Four females, and my brother that was born while my father was here. He was five years old.

NAUGHTON: Can you name them all?

ADARIO: Yes. My older sister's name was Esther, and my second sister, the one that doesn't remember anything, is Celia, and my third sister was Filomena, calling her Phyllis, and I'm Carmella, and my brother was Tony.

NAUGHTON: And what was your mother's name?

ADARIO: Edmenia[ph]. Her maiden name was Celeste, Celeste, or Celeste. And there we were.

NAUGHTON: How did you feel when you first saw land?

ADARIO: Oh, when we saw the Statue of Liberty it was just the

most emotional and most exciting thing, you know, everybody clapping and everybody, oh, after such a journey (she laughs) it was just, you know, to see land it just, wonderful, you know, to get off the, I hate the water. It must be from that, you know. It really makes me sick.

NAUGHTON: How were you treated, generally, by the crew on board ship?

ADARIO: I was, I always seemed to be a happy type of person. I don't know. I think everything was okay. I'm not sure.

NAUGHTON: Now, when your ship docked in New York Harbor, do you remember, how did you get from the ship to Ellis Island? Do you remember taking a ride on a ferry?

ADARIO: That's why, I can't seem to remember that. I hope it comes back to me today, you know? I really don't remember the ferry. Is there another way?

NAUGHTON: Probably not.

ADARIO: We must have come on the ferry then and then come right into that huge room with benches and that staircase that I remember. Those are the two things

that are really in my mind.

NAUGHTON: Well, I want you to tell me everything about your experience once you got off the boat and you got onto Ellis Island. I want to know about the people you met.

ADARIO: The people, everybody seemed to be worried sick, you know. Huddling, huddling together, you know, wondering everybody, you know, talking with each other and some of them not talking at all. You just sit there waiting with the hope, you know. And then when you get in that line, you know, to be examined, it's really quite emotional and scary. Not understanding, you know, uh, what's going on, it's really hard. Not understanding the language, and the American language, it seems very harsh. It seems like people are yelling at you instead of, you know, talking. Like, uh, my father would ask directions to some policeman or something, and they'd go, "Whaaaaa!" You know, not look at you. It was really, uh, it's not an Italian way. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: Did your family speak English, any English?

ADARIO: Nothing, not even a syllable. And we thought my father, oh, my God, he speaks English. Isn't it wonderful? And we went to school immediately, and in two weeks we knew that he didn't speak very good English. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: Were you separated from your mother when you got to Ellis Island?

ADARIO: No, no. We were together all the time.

NAUGHTON: How long were you on Ellis Island?

ADARIO: Hmmm, uh, I would say hours, but I couldn't, you know, specify.

NAUGHTON: Were you detained on Ellis Island?

ADARIO: No. No, no. We were detained on the ship, because my father hadn't come.

NAUGHTON: Your father didn't pick you up from Ellis Island?

ADARIO: Well, he did finally, but he, we were the last ones off the ship. Everybody would come and they would wave, you know, from the shore, or from the ship, you know, they'd recognize each other, and we would wait there and freeze to death, you know, on the, it was

just a, but we got here.

NAUGHTON: While you were waiting at Ellis Island, did you have to go through examinations?

ADARIO: Well, I think I remember mainly the eyes. They looked at your eyes with this little gadget, you know, a tool that looked like a, where you button shoes in the old days. And somehow, you know, like, we went right by without any problem at all.

NAUGHTON: Did they feed you while you were on Ellis Island?

ADARIO: That I don't remember. I don't remember. I don't remember that at all. Strange. I thought I remembered everything, but I don't.

NAUGHTON: What was your first reaction when you saw the main hall?

ADARIO: The main hall? Uh, I'll, I think you're looking at people more than the place, you know, wondering what's going to happen. That leaves more of an impression on you. I can remember it's, the benches being dark, and that staircase being dark. I don't know why, I remember that. And people going up those stairs, I guess. I don't remember going up them. I

don't know if we did.

NAUGHTON: Did it feel like you sat and waited for a long time?

ADARIO: Well, yes. It always seems, when you're waiting, when you're anxious, you know, about something it always seems a lot longer. And it wasn't. The longest thing was on the ship. (she laughs) I mean, you know, waiting to be picked up, or claimed.

NAUGHTON: How were the officials at Ellis Island? How did they treat your family while you were here?

ADARIO: Uh, well, we had no complaints. We had nothing to compare it with. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: And so your father came to Ellis Island and picked you up.

ADARIO: Uh-huh.

NAUGHTON: And then can you tell me what happened to your family?

ADARIO: Well, believe it or not, my father wanted us to go to Boston on the boat. So you can imagine that was not very pleasant. My older sister just put her foot

down. She said no way we were going to get on a boat. You know, she was eighteen. And we came on the train, and I sat with my second sister, the one I was very close with. And, oh, we were just looking at the buildings coming from New York, you know, all the lights, and we rode all night. I think we stayed awake the whole night while we drove to Boston.

NAUGHTON: Did you stay, in New York, did you stay overnight? Or you left immediately for Boston?

ADARIO: No, we left immediately, and we came to Cambridge.

NAUGHTON: What was life like in Cambridge?

ADARIO: Well, my father didn't believe that we should have an outside life. He didn't want us to be Americanized. He didn't want us to be anything. So we would go to school, come back, stay home, never socialize. We'd look out the window at the, you know, the different people. But, uh, I went as far as the, see, I had gone as far as the fourth grade in school, in Italy. Uh, so when we came here they put you, we were put all in one class, everybody from all over the world. None of us spoke a word of English. But it's amazing how quickly you learn to speak when you can't

speak your own language. In two weeks we were saying sentences. And we were there a year, and then they put you in whatever class they think you belong. So they put me in the fourth grade, and it was like almost a review, just a translation, that's all it was. So then they put me in the sixth grade, and I left there to go to work. I've been working ever since, and I still am. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: Tell me about your home in Cambridge with your family.

ADARIO: Um, well, my father and, it wasn't too pleasant, you know? He was, uh, my sister got engaged to this wonderful fellow, uh, that lived across the street. He was a ladies tailor, a wonderful person. And, uh, they were engaged to be married, and my father wanted him to send for papers that he was free, that he was never married before. But since he was an American citizen, I guess they don't, you don't have any more to do with the old country, and he broke them up. And he was really a tyrant type of thing, and it made things very unpleasant. And then my mother got pregnant, and she had another boy. And when he was two years old my father left us and went on his own

to do his own thing.

NAUGHTON: What were your school days like here in America?

ADARIO: Uh, we liked school, yeah. The teachers liked us. They used to have us go up in front of the class and sing Italian songs, when I think of it. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: Do you have any special memory that comes to mind, any funny or amusing anecdote about school or your childhood growing up in Cambridge that you can recall?

ADARIO: Uh, well, I really, uh, since my father was so strict and so, it wasn't, you know, we just went to work, come home, hand him the money and, you know, stuff like that. And then he went into photography, and he had a photography studio in Boston. I don't know what he did there, but, anyway, I don't think he was making any money. And so when he left, you know, my mother cried. They were married thirty-five years. It was terrible. And we were all glad, you know? We were wondering why she was so upset.

NAUGHTON: Carmella, how did your mother adapt to life in

America?

ADARIO: Uh, she was good. She was, uh, she loved her family, and we were all around her, and, uh, she, she was okay.

NAUGHTON: Did your mother work when she came to America?

ADARIO: My father found her a job two weeks after we got here. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: And what did your mother do?

ADARIO: In a factory, stitching.

NAUGHTON: And when did you go to work? Do you remember how old you were?

ADARIO: Fourteen.

NAUGHTON: And what was your first job?

ADARIO: I was, (she laughs) let's see. I was working in this factory, uh, not too far from home. By that time they had bought three shacks in East Cambridge that was near the courthouse, and we lived there, and did a lot of work in that house. Um, I, uh, what did I do? They used to make, do you know what rompers

are, babies rompers? They're like the little jumpsuits that kids have now. And I used to count them and, I wasn't allowed to work on the sewing machine. I think it was not legal unless you were sixteen or something like that. So that's what I did just to get, uh, you know, the threads, you cut them, you know, you just make them neat. So I was making four dollars a week. And then I got a fifty cent raise at one point. I said, "Oh, I'm not going to say that I got the raise. I'm going to keep the fifty cents." And I didn't know what to do with it.

BEcause we never went anywhere and never did anything. Then I began to sew. And then I made a bad marriage. I had one daughter, which is wonderful, and three grandchildren, and I went into business for myself.

NAUGHTON: What's your daughter's name?

ADARIO: Joan, and my granddaughter's name is Janet, and my grandson is a rock star drummer. His name is John Robert. And I have a youngest one that's next to a genius, so they say, his name is Andrew.

NAUGHTON: Carmella, we're going to pause for a moment and Peter

is going to turn over the tape.

ADARIO: Sure.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

NAUGHTON: Okay. We're on Side Two of our tape, and I'm here at the Ellis Island Recording Studio with Carmella Adario. And we're speaking about Carmella's experiences and life in America. Carmella, you were telling me that you are an artist. Can you explain a bit more?

ADARIO: Well, this artist business with me, it's really a big surprise. I just paint, you know, for fun, fun things. Somebody said, "Oh, you should exhibit your paintings." And I said, you know, I'm still laughing that this has happened to me, you know? So I, somebody called me from the Art Council, and it happened to be, uh, I had just broken my hip. And he said, uh, "You can hang your paintings on April 1st." I said, I didn't know who he was, and I said, "What is this, an April Fool joke?" (she laughs) Since it was April 1st. He said, "No, no, no. This is . . ." You know, so it was at the Summerville

Hospital lobby, which is a great place to hang paintings. I didn't believe that they were mine when we hung them there. Beautiful lighting, and they said, unbeknownst to them, I sold six paintings at the exhibit, and it's never happened before, at the Summerville Hospital. So they asked me I can do it again next year, and now I'm hanging them at the library at the end of this month. I don't know.

NAUGHTON: When did you begin to pain?

ADARIO: (she sighs) About five or six years ago, something like that. I didn't even call it painting, you know? I'm just, actually I'm stuck on flowers. I did more flowers than anything else. But people, they said there was such excitement in the lobby of the Summerville Hospital. I couldn't understand that. And about a hundred people turned out on my exhibit, on my reception.

NAUGHTON: Was this something you liked to do as a child? Did you like to . . .

ADARIO: No, I never did that in my life. I sew. I sew.
(she laughs)

NAUGHTON: Carmella, I have some questions about your family that I would like to ask. Did anyone return to the old country?

ADARIO: Never, never.

NAUGHTON: Okay. What was your religious life like here?

ADARIO: We're Catholics, and there's a little church, you know, people are not, you go to church, you know. There wasn't this big deal like, you know, uh, it was very relaxed as far as I can tell. We received Communion, and that's it, you know? There's nothing, uh, that was, uh, a big thing like they make out of it here. Maybe it was the small town. I don't know.

NAUGHTON: Are there any special stories that you'd like to share with us about your brothers and sisters, and about their lives in America?

ADARIO: Uh, I miss my sister that died very much, the one that was three years older than I, because we had so many things in common. And, uh, we could laugh over things, you know? She remembered things. She would remember a lot more than I did, altogether. It would be great. But, uh, I miss her, and my older sister,

but my brother that died, the one that was born, you know, right after my father came here. He was a musician, and he really lived on the fast lane, and he died with liver. That was sad. Other than that, my young brother now, the one that was born here, has become my guardian. You know, since I injured myself, he comes, he retired, and he comes, it's like having a custodian. He and his wife and my sister, they all come down three afternoons a week and they, they're going to take care of my cat this weekend. (she laughs) And, uh, it really is a wonderful relationship that we have now the last two or three years, because when he was working, he's an electrician, and, uh, he was only two years old when my father left us, so, and he was wounded in the World War Two. He was at the Anzio[ph] Beachhead in Mount Casino, in all those places, in Africa. They send these kids like, you know, he was only nineteen, and he was a young nineteen, you know. He never went out with boys or anything like that. He was, he and my mother were very close. So it's been wonderful, what he's doing for me now, you know? Everybody that comes, they all say, "I want a brother, I want a brother." I say, "Well, you can't have him."

NAUGHTON: Carmella, you mention that your father left your family after, some time after you had been in America. Were you reunited with your father at any point?

ADARIO: No. There was a period here, I can't tell, a few years back, I began to think, you know, we have a father, we're all adults. How do you look up a missing person, I mean, you haven't seen for years and years and years. I wrote to the Social Security office in Baltimore. I could not believe I got a letter back saying to call this certain person in Cambridge in the Social Security, and she very gently and nicely told me that he had died three years ago in Danvis[ph]. He didn't claim any dependents, and he was buried in Potter's field, because my mother was dead a long time then, by then. I thought, what a terrible thing, you know, to have a nice family as we are, he could have had such a nice life, but that's the way it was. So I found that out. And, uh, I said, well, we had a small life insurance, you know. In those days you used to have, like, fifteen cents a week or something like that. So we ended up with having sixty-five dollars each. I said, "Can

you imagine living all those years, and that's the end of his life." It was sad, you know? So. He was gone. And then, uh, it was too late to collect his, uh, you know, they have, social security, they, you have something like three hundred dollars to bury. It was too late, you know, because the time had gone.

It was three years. A very nice doctor there told me that he was in Danvis[ph] Hospital, but it wasn't the mental part. He was, he died, I guess he was quite old.

NAUGHTON: Carmella, on this special weekend in October, the Columbus Day weekend, you've traveled a long distance to be with us here today in Ellis Island with some friends, and I wonder if you'd like to tell us about your friends who you made the journey with.

ADARIO: Oh, well, I'll tell you. I have been trying to come here for the last two years. And then, as I said before, I broke my hip, and that whole year went by, and something else. And Sarah, which is just the most wonderful person, she arranged all this, and I didn't know where I was coming into, you know? I said, "My God, I wonder what she's doing," you know? And, uh, she's so special in my life, and Pam and

Steve, of course. She has the same birthday as my granddaughter, so I call her my granddaughter. And, uh, Steve is also my grandson, because he has the same birthday as my grandson. So we're one family, although we don't get together that much, you know. But they're there, and they're just really great. And I loved coming here. I loved coming with, it means more to me that I came with them, uh, than with anybody else, you know?

NAUGHTON: Is this your first time back to New York?

ADARIO: I have a . . .

NAUGHTON: Since you were at Ellis Island?

ADARIO: No, I have a nephew who's an actor, and his wife is also an actress. And we used to come, when my two older grandchildren were small I used to take them to New York for the week's vacation, and we would spend, because they were both in Broadway shows at the time. We would spend the time with the two of them, and took them all around New York. We did that for quite a few years when they were still, you know, before they got to be teenagers. So we enjoyed New York very much. And then my other nephew worked for

Brookhaven, and he lived in Long Island in, uh, Patchogue, yeah, somewhere there. We used to visit him. So we'd make the rounds, you know, with the three, the three of them.

NAUGHTON: What part of your life today is a reflection of your life in the old country, in Italy?

ADARIO: What part?

NAUGHTON: Is there any part of you that you feel that you have taken from Italy and that still remains with you? Any special memories?

ADARIO: No, no.

NAUGHTON: What does it mean to be American?

ADARIO: I always thought, you know, as soon as I came here that we were going to be Americans, you know? I didn't hang on. We had nothing to hang on to. It was just misery we were living there, you know? We didn't leave anything behind that you'd want to hang on to. I remember the, the years of, I don't know how my mother fed us, you know, but, uh, my older sister was telling me one day that she'd always see tears in my mother's eyes knowing that she couldn't

give us, you know the things that we needed. Uh, I remember going to kindergarten in a parochial school, and the first time I tasted milk, I think it was a program that the Americans had during the World War One for the European countries. I don't know all the details. But I do think it was a, you know, bread, we'd get, and this rice, as I told you before. And then somebody come from the farm, you know, they'd have some vegetables or eggs. Other than that I don't remember anything else. But I always remember being a happy person, and I didn't like anybody to, uh, criticize anybody, or I didn't want any unpleasant things, you know? And I, you know, I remember jumping rope and stuff like that, you know?

NAUGHTON: Are there any special thoughts or memories that you would like to leave with us today on your visit to Ellis Island?

ADARIO: I think it's such a wonderful thing what they've done here. I mean, it's very hard to go back and really visualize it as I remember it, because I'm sure that everything's so shiny and so beautiful and so clean, and that's a, that's a wonderful feeling coming here that, you know how many people have gone through

here, you know, and really made well. I never could understand, you know. People come here, make money here, and then they go back, and they never understood that. I think I'm more American than Americans. At least I feel that way. I don't, I think people ought to get rid of this patriotism. I think we wouldn't have wars. Fighting over, we're all human beings. It's such a short time you're in this world, you know? And to fight over a piece of land, it seems like boys playing a game, you know, fighting each other, slaughtering each other. Uh, it's so bad. It would be nice to be able to remember peace that people, I think intermarrying helps some.

NAUGHTON: So you would say that your memories of America overall are good ones?

ADARIO: Oh, yeah.

NAUGHTON: Is there anything else that you would like to say to us here today?

ADARIO: (she sighs) I wish everybody would be happier than they are. (she laughs) The small complaint, I have no room for small complaints. I'm so happy to, I live one day at a time. I enjoy. I have lots of

friends. I don't know. Just, my life has been amazing, I guess. And it isn't that I had a lot. I don't have many needs. Maybe I'm not used to it from the beginning. (she laughs)

NAUGHTON: Well, Carmella, on that note I suppose this is a good place for us to end this interview. On behalf of the National Park Service and the Ellis Island Oral History Project, I would like to thank you for taking the time to share the story of your immigrant experience in America. This is Cathy Naughton signing off with Carmella Adario on Saturday, the 8th of October 1994, for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

ADARIO: Can I say something? I, uh, I am so happy to be here, and I want to especially thank Pam and Steve and Sarah for making it possible for me, because I find that I'm not getting around very easy, you know? I just, uh, though I'm doing very well, you know, that's not a complaint, but I'm very happy to be here today. It's really been a highlight in my life, and I want to thank you, Cathy.

NAUGHTON: Thank you very much, Carmella.