

EI-559

O'CONNOR, ANN MARIE BROWN

BIRTHDATE: OCTOBER 5, 1902

INTERVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 26, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 59:31

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, Ph.D.

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: MELODY FEIST, 3/2004

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: MAIJA THORSTROM (4/2004) AND KIP CLARK
AND CHARLES MITCHELL (7/2004)

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: O'Connor has a thick accent and is sometimes hard to understand. There is a large clock ticking and chiming in the background throughout the interview. O'Connor's microphone moves around periodically, creating an almost incessant swishing sound during the beginning of the interview and periodically throughout, and also creating some vocal distortion during much of the interview.

IRELAND, 1923

AGE 20

PASSAGE ON "THE FRANCONIA"

PORT OF EMBARCATION: QUEENSTOWN

OLD COUNTRY RESIDENCE: HOLYOKE, BALLIEBOROUGH, COUNTY MONAGHAN

UNITED STATES RESIDENCE(S); EAST NEW YORK, BROOKLYN,NY

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here today with Mrs. Ann O'Connor, at her son's home in Park Ridge, New Jersey. The date is October 26, 1994. Mrs. O'Connor came from Ireland in 1923, when she was twenty years old. Well, I'm happy to be here, and I'm looking forward to hear everything...

O'CONNOR: Thank you.

LEVINE: ...you have to say. And I want to start by your saying

your maiden name and your birth date.

O'CONNOR: Oh. Ann Marie Brown was my maiden name.

LEVINE: And your birth date?

O'CONNOR: October the 5th, 1902, I think so, yeah.

LEVINE: 0-2, okay. And where in Ireland were you born?

O'CONNOR: Holyoke, Bailieborough, [male voice in background:
"County Bingham."] County--but the whole thing County
Monaghan.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you live in the same place up until the
time you left...

O'CONNOR: Yes, I did.

LEVINE: ...for America? OK. Well, how about if you describe the
town you grew up in? When you think of it, what are the
kinds of things that you remember about it?

O'CONNOR: Well, we were very happy there, that I must say. We didn't
have much, but we were very happy there. My father and

mother was wonderful, too. And we went to school, about twenty-five or thirty, the most, in the one school. And we had the same teachers, the father and the mother. The father was the principal, and the mother was the assistant. And that's all there was in the school I went to.

LEVINE: So, all the grades were in one room? Is that...

O'CONNOR: We had two rooms.

LEVINE: Two rooms.

O'CONNOR: Yeah. I think it was up to the fifth grade, fourth grade, I think, we'd stay with the assistant, and we'd go in to the principal for the, up to the eighth.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And they were very strict.

LEVINE: What were they strict about?

O'CONNOR: More about religion than anything. They were very, very much into religion. They would keep you in wintertime,

and put the light on, like we have here, to make sure that you knew all your--and you couldn't say yes or no to an answer. You had to give a nice sentence with it. They were very, very strict.

LEVINE: Uh-huh

O'CONNOR: But we liked them. They were very good. Now, but they had no sons...Anna, Mary, Catherine, Libby, four, I think, four daughters they had. One of them died pretty young, lovely, lovely girl. But all that, they're all dead and gone now. I'm around, but they are not. [laughs]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, did you have brothers and sisters who went...

O'CONNOR: One brother and one sister. We all went to the same school.

LEVINE: What were your brother and sister's names?

O'CONNOR: Patrick Brown was my brother's name, and Bridget Brown was my sister's name.

LEVINE: Were they older or younger?

O'CONNOR: My brother was older. My sister was younger.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did they come to America, too?

O'CONNOR: No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: My sister came on a visit.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: But they never came to stay here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what about your mother and father? What were their names?

O'CONNOR: My mother's name before she got married was Bridget Costello. And my father's name was Thomas Brown.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And were your mother and father from the same town?

O'CONNOR: Yup, the same [?], neighbors.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: They were neighbors, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And how about grandparents? Did you have grandparents?

O'CONNOR: Yes, my grandfather was Patrick Brown, and my grandmother's name was Winifred O'Brien Brown.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Now, on my mother's side, I do not remember her family. They were a distance away from us, and I do not remember--although I was called after my grandmother, there--I do not remember much about them.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Tell me about the grand-, your father's mother and father, that set of grandparents. Did you ever spend time with them? Did you...

O'CONNOR: Oh, they lived with us in the same house. We lived together.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what do you remember? What were they like?

O'CONNOR: Well, my grandfather died pretty young, I think. He, I couldn't tell you the exact age, but I think he died...

LEVINE: Well, how old were you, do you remember, when he died?

O'CONNOR: I hadn't started school yet, that I do remember. And I think we start school at five over there 'cause I thought it was a great treat to be brought to school, oh... And them days, they made their casket right in the house. And I had to go into school to get the plate with his name on it, or something. And I went with my brother, and I thought that was such a wonderful treat that I could be brought into the school.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: I remember that I had my head over the desk to see if I could see what he was doing. 'Course just putting his name like this on the plate.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: That I can remember. And I can remember the day he was buried. I went a way back, how I would hear them cry.

That I can remember.

LEVINE: Huh.

O'CONNOR: I don't remember much more about him.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember about your grandmother?

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes. My grandmother was still alive when I came out here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, what was she like?

O'CONNOR: Well, she was a very easygoing person, that I would say. She wasn't bossy to us when we were children. She just sat in her chair, and she done knitting or something like that. She didn't do any work. She never did any work around.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: She always sat. She was little, but she would do knitting or sewing or something like that. And she, they would take care of her, my mother and father. And without they were there, they didn't need a babysitter.

LEVINE: So did you ever do things with her?

O'CONNOR: Played cards, that's all I can remember doing with her--that's the most thing I can remember doing in Ireland, is playing--we still do it here.

LEVINE: What card games did you play with your grandmother?

O'CONNOR: Oh, we used to play Spots with my grandmother. We didn't know. I guess maybe a five would beat a six in black, and in red, a nine would beat a ten, I think, with the opposite, the colors in the card. That I can remember. We called it "Spots."

LEVINE: Huh.

O'CONNOR: And I know that's what we used to play. The black card, a five, I think, would beat a six. And the red card, a ten would beat a nine or anything all the way down the line.

LEVINE: Huh. Were you good at cards, do you remember?

O'CONNOR: I don't remember what I used to win or not. That I don't

remember.

LEVINE: Would you just play with your grandmother, just the two of you, or were your brother and sister, too, or...

O'CONNOR: With all my [fain PH] for my father and mother, used to, at nighttime, used to play cards with us. We played Twenty-five, though. I remember that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: With my father and mother.

LEVINE: What would be, like, a typical day? Can you, did you get up early? Did you have chores to do?

O'CONNOR: Well, you'd have little odds and ends you'd have to--you had no running water in the house at that time. You had to go and get the pail of water.

LEVINE: Where did you have to go?

O'CONNOR: A little--right in my own home--for rainwater, you only had to go maybe from here out to the road there. But, for the spring water, we had a little distance to go,

like what you'd cook with or drink was real spring water.

LEVINE: And did you carry it or did you...have a wagon, or...

O'CONNOR: Oh, you had to bring a pail. No, you brought a pail, and carry it to, maybe two pails, one on each hand.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And it would do you for the whole day.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: 'Cause you would not use it for anything, only cooking or drinking. We made our tea from it, and... Now, I don't know if they were cooking for the potato--that I can't remember, whether we used the regular water or the spring--I think we used the regular water for cooking.

LEVINE: Would you go and get water, like, in the morning, before you...

O'CONNOR: Oh, yeah. You'd make sure you had enough for your tea in the night before. That you'd take care of.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: You'd have your water in for your tea the night before.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Oh, we had all our little routines.

LEVINE: So, when you got up in the morning when you were going to school, like, when would you get up and what would be, like, your routine?

O'CONNOR: Well, we didn't have to be in school until nine, maybe quarter to nine--whatever time you, the school would be open, I think at a little after eight. You could play in the schoolyard if you wanted to, and you could go into the school if you wanted to and do some reading or do some studying for yourself if you wanted to. If you didn't do your homework the night before, maybe you could do it. [laughs]

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Too much I don't remember about the first grades in school, really.

LEVINE: Then would you go home for lunch?

O'CONNOR: No, you take your lunch along. You brought your lunch.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And the teacher's lunch would be brought to her, and she would eat her lunch in school.

LEVINE: You mean...

O'CONNOR: And you'd be very happy if you were called to go and pick up the teacher's lunch because you get a nice little cookie or something nice, a treat for yourself.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: There's little things you can remember, other things I don't, I don't.

LEVINE: So, then when school was over, what did you do usually?

O'CONNOR: Well, you go home. We had to change our clothes at night--they're just, school clothes is kept for school

alone.

LEVINE: Well, did you have, like, a school uniform?

O'CONNOR: Just a pinafore only that I can remember. I think you could wear any dress, but there was like a pinafore that you... It covered you mostly all the ways down, that I can remember. But I think you wore your regular dress underneath that. It wasn't a uniform. You could make it yourself. You didn't buy it.

LEVINE: Oh. Did you make yours?

O'CONNOR: No, my mother used to make it--I think maybe I made it when I was older.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Because I could sew.

LEVINE: And what did the boys wear?

O'CONNOR: The suits. When they were younger, they wore the knickers. I don't think I ever saw boys in the shorts. I think they always wore knickers, I think.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, when you came home, you'd take off the pinafore.

O'CONNOR: Yes, and you'd leave the dress on.

LEVINE: And then what would you do?

O'CONNOR: Well, if they had any chores for you to do, you'd have to do it first.

LEVINE: What might they be?

O'CONNOR: Well, to go get the spring water, maybe, would be one thing. To go to the store might be another thing when you were a little older. There was no heavy work for us, not work that you could complain about.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm. And then did you do your homework, what, after dinner?

O'CONNOR: No, absolutely before dinner we had to have our homework done. But I can remember my brother studying after supper, and the men playing cards. I can remember that. It's funny how some things stays with you.

LEVINE: Now, who were the men? Your father, and who else?

O'CONNOR: There was three men in the house: my grandfather, my father, and my brother. And there was my grandmother, my mother--four women. And there was--it was more tight quarters, but we got along. We were very happy, that's all I can say. That never bothered us.

LEVINE: How about food? Do you remember any food that your mother made or your grandmother made that you liked?

O'CONNOR: She always--you ever heard tell of the soda bread?

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Well, that was made every day.

LEVINE: Your mother did it?

O'CONNOR: Yes, every day, she used to make the soda bread. Maybe once a week, she made potato cake that we loved. We all raved about it. And I don't think there was any others. The apple pie she used to make, but make it different to here. She made the apple cake.

LEVINE: Describe it, if you remember.

O'CONNOR: You make the dough a little richer, you know, than you would for the soda bread, and you'd spread it over the table, like this. And you cooked the apples and the sugar in the middle of it, and then she used to turn it in, like this.

LEVINE: Hm.

O'CONNOR: It was open in the top, but it was more like a piece of bread. What do we call here, what we get, the deep, deep apple pie...

LEVINE: Deep-dish?

O'CONNOR: ...the deep-dish apple pie, something of that order.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: But I think I remember--except Christmas, we got a lot of--we got great treats for Christmas.

LEVINE: Describe what Christmas was like when you were a little

girl.

O'CONNOR: Well, we celebrated more on Christmas Eve than we did on Christmas Day.

LEVINE: What did you do?

O'CONNOR: We would go to church. We would come home, and you could have all the goodies you wanted, which we appreciated. If you wanted a drink, you had it. We wouldn't--I don't know--we know if we wanted we could get a drink, but we didn't take it. I don't know if my brother did or not. But outside of going to church and coming home and having the raisin bread, or whatever treats we had, we didn't do anything else, I don't think. We made sure the neighbors, if they did not have milk, if they did not have butter, that you would divide with them. That's one thing they would take care of. I don't remember anything more about it, really.

LEVINE: Did you have a garden, or did you have animals?

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes. We had cows, we had sheep, we had a little horse, we had a little donkey--I remember a donkey, getting to ride him. And we had a horse that would know, since we

were big enough to do it, would come over to a certain spot where we could get up on his back, and he'd take us for a ride. My sister and mys-, I can remember that well. And that horse knew the exact spot to come to, that he would take us for a little ride around the field. And we never fell--I often think of that--we never fell.

LEVINE: Huh. What was your father doing for work?

O'CONNOR: In the farm.

LEVINE: He was a farmer?

O'CONNOR: Mm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: That's in a farm, and then my brother, when my brother got older, he used to go to England.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: They'd go there--I think it was for six months, or seven at the time. They were always home for Christmas, though.

LEVINE: And, you mean, for work, he would go to England?

O'CONNOR: Oh, he worked in the farm with my father.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And we used to have to go picking stones--I remember that job that I didn't like. When they'd dig up the dirt, and they'd smooth it out, if you see any stone, you had a little pail, you'd pick it up and take that--that's a job I didn't like. [clock chimes]

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: I didn't do much in the farm. I never done much in the farm. I wasn't a farmer. I guess that's why I never went back, maybe. [laughs]

LEVINE: Let's see, is there anything else that you remember, any kind of ceremonies or holidays, things that you celebrated in Ireland that are different here?

O'CONNOR: Well, we didn't have, we had a bonfire, but I don't remember what time that bonfire was. Was June sometime, I think, but I can't remember the date that we all got

together and you'd have a great--you'd have for two, a month before that, the [animas PH] wood that you'd find, you know, or anything, we'd save it, and they'd make a big fire. The name for it was some specialty. I don't remember what it was, though. But, uh...

LEVINE: Did you have something like Name Days?

O'CONNOR: There, yes. What is the day after Christmas?

LEVINE: Saint Stephen's?

O'CONNOR: Saint Stephens's Day, we had something for that. They used to go out, like here. They didn't go out looking for m- begging like here as much, in Ireland as much as they do here. But they had a great--Saint Stephens's Day, that was a big day.

LEVINE: What happened on Saint Stephen's Day?

O'CONNOR: Well, the children would dress up, like they do here for Halloween, and go around from house to house, and they had a little saying they had.

LEVINE: Like what? What would be the saying?

O'CONNOR: "The wren, the wren, the king of the birds. Saint Stephens's Day, she was found in the firs. And though she is small, her family is great. Raise up Misses, and give us a treat." That was what they would sing for you before you give--that I remember.

LEVINE: And then what? The people would give them a treat?

O'CONNOR: You would give them...yes, whatever, candy, money. I don't know what they used to give them, but I remember that well.

LEVINE: Huh.

O'CONNOR: I never went out doing that, but I remember it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: But, then, I think that was the only time they went around begging for anything that I can remember of.

LEVINE: Mm. Do you remember any stories that were, like, childhood stories that either you were told or maybe, when you started to read, you read, that were kind of common

stories in Ireland at that time?

O'CONNOR: Nah. Don't read, I'm not good, I'm not much good at that.
That I'm not much good at, uh.

LEVINE: How about games? Do you remember any--besides
cards--things that you played?

O'CONNOR: Oh, we used to play house. We used to play house. That
I remember. You'd have a couple plates. They might have
chip on them, a crack, but you were allowed to play with
them out in the yard, and we'd be making little patty
cakes, you know, from the dirt, not from--that I remember.
But, I don't remember any rhymes we had with that. That
I don't remember.

LEVINE: Did you do thinks like jump rope, or...

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes. Oh, that was a great--jump rope was great--that
was a great game.

LEVINE: Now, did you have rhymes that you said when you jumped
rope?

O'CONNOR: I don't remember.

LEVINE: Mm.

O'CONNOR: That I don't remember. I don't remember that. There was something, but I can't remember.

LEVINE: Well, if things come back to you...

O'CONNOR: Yeah.

LEVINE: ...as we're talking, you can just mention them.

O'CONNOR: Mm. 'kay. Yeah.

LEVINE: How about, who were you closest to in the family? Were you...

O'CONNOR: My brother.

LEVINE: Yeah. What was he like?

O'CONNOR: I don't know. He was very nice. He was good-natured. I liked my brother very... I certainly got along. We never had a--there was only the three of us, though.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you have a best friend?

O'CONNOR: Yes, but they are all dead and gone. There isn't one of them alive, only myself. But, we were all neighbors. When I came out here, there was four of us that went to the same school.

LEVINE: You came together?

O'CONNOR: Coming the same day.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: And then, when we got on the--see, I left home the 13th of June.

LEVINE: Well, maybe we should first talk about... How was it decided that you would come to America?

O'CONNOR: Well, I'll tell ya, that Mary that you went to, her mother wrote to my uncle out here that was never, had never had children. Because Mary was out here ahead of me. And the mother was anxious that I would be out here, you know, that we'd be together. And she wrote to my uncle and asked my uncle to write to my mother and give me permission

to come out here.

LEVINE: Now, had you been friends with Mary?

O'CONNOR: Oh, we went to the same school, Mary and I. We all went to the s-, the whole village, we all went, but there wasn't many. Nobody had a big family, it seems, all except Mary's mother and father. I think they would be the biggest family going into the school. I think there was twelve of them, I think.

LEVINE: I think so, yeah.

O'CONNOR: Mm, twelve, I think.

LEVINE: So, your uncle contacted your mother?

O'CONNOR: Yes. Then I was supposed to come a year earlier, but my mother was not feeling good, and they wouldn't allow me to come, so I put it off for another year. That's how I got here.

LEVINE: Were you taking care of your mother? Is that...

O'CONNOR: Well, I was trying to, you know, they didn't want me,

when she wasn't feeling good, they didn't want me to leave home, I guess. I remember that. One year earlier, I was supposed to come. But then, when I was coming, one of the women was out here before and goin' back. And she knew all the runs. She didn't tell it all to us in the beginning, but she gave us an idea of what we would have to go through.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you knew about what you'd have to go through, or...

O'CONNOR: I had no idea in the world, no idea in the world.

LEVINE: Do you know what you thought about this country before you ever came, why you wanted to come?

O'CONNOR: Oh, well, everybody came home in their lovely clothes, and they had gold tooth, as I daresay. We always thought that a Yank always had gold teeth. That's what we thought as children growing up: You weren't a Yankee if you didn't have a gold tooth in your head. That I remember. And I remember the women coming home was some relations to me--but distant relations of my mother's--that used to tell us stories about this country.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything, anything that you knew before you came?

O'CONNOR: Well, I remember one of them, now, I won't repeat because you wouldn't know it and I wouldn't know it. This woman, I think, was a cook, she was, in some rich house--I don't know what. And there was a little one there. And she said some dirty word, I don't know what it was, in Gaelic. And the child repeated it at the table that night, with company. I would, uh, it wasn't a good word, I'm sure. I remember her telling that I thought that was wicked. And I think it was the same woman that once said, one time, that the lady asked her where the potato was left because leftover the night before, was. And we thought that was wicked, too, to be looking for a potato. We thought nothing of a potato. And that few things, I can remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And there's many things I can't remember, really.

LEVINE: So, did you see the letters from your uncle to your mother? Do you remember what they said?

O'CONNOR: He was, he--yes--he said he would be glad to have me come, but it would be up to my mother to give the consent, that he would not do anything without her consent. So, I guess then she wrote and told him that she wasn't feeling good, so went out for another year. That's how I come the ne-, the next year I mightn't have come that year, either, but this girl that was out here before was coming back here again. And her sister was coming with her. So, that's why I insisted, I think, on coming that year.

LEVINE: Were you working at that time, or what...

O'CONNOR: I never worked in Ireland.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: No. Only on the farm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: The little jobs you hated to do, [laughing] but you had to do.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, after you finished school, you went through that school through the eighth grade...

O'CONNOR: Yes.

LEVINE: Then, after that, what did you mainly do?

O'CONNOR: I didn't do anything, only around the house. I did not go to high school. There was no high school.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm.

O'CONNOR: Just a grammar school, only.

LEVINE: Well did you, like, sew and things like that?

O'CONNOR: Yes. Well, I could sew, and I could knit. And I guess I helped my mother with the wash. The different things, you know, that had to be done, the cleaning around the house, and that, we would help with that. But we didn't think it was a project, you know. We didn't think anything of it.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm. So, what made you want to go to this country, do you know?

O'CONNOR: Well, this girl that was my friend, that, well, they

were--in fact, her mother and my mother were first cousins, and we were good friends. Now, when she was going to come back with her sister, I think that got me set on coming.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm. So, when you traveled, you traveled with...

O'CONNOR: Oh, there was a group of us, as a group. We had a good time coming over.

LEVINE: Now, tell about, tell about getting ready to leave. Do you remember what you packed, or...

O'CONNOR: Well, in my time, your clothes was almost made for you. You didn't buy very many clothes. You went to the dressmaker. And I had two dresses made for me, that's all. Whatever else I had, I had a small little suitcase, but not much. You got everything new; you came with everything new. But, you didn't, I didn't, um, what I think this other girl would tell us, t'would be fools to bring too much. You would have to buy stuff when you come here. That's what I think, now.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm.

O'CONNOR: 'Cause I remember getting two dresses made. I think I have a picture of myself with one of them, yet, if I could find it.

LEVINE: Mm. So, then did the group that went with you, how many people were there altogether?

O'CONNOR: Well, in our group that stayed together, there was fourteen of us. And we had--not the--the one of them, I think, but he didn't, played--what do you call the, the whistle that you whistle into for music? [male voice in background: "Penny whistle."] Hmm? ["The penny whistle?"] Yes! Not a penny whistle, it's a regular, where you blow it for...

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And we used to have it--up on the deck we could play that and dance to whatever you thought--we had a good time coming over. We enjoyed coming over very good. We had a very good time. But when I saw the Statue of Liberty, I got so homesick, and I wanted to go, come back. So, then we heard the rumor that we would not be allowed to land. I did not hear of the Fourth of July. If I did, I did not pay attention to it. But, I heard, the rumor

went out that we would not be allowed to land, and I was very happy I was going to be sent back.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: But when I found out that we were going to land, and this woman that was with us before said, "You'll be going at different gates. See, you'll go out different gates, now," she said. "Don't get excited. Some will go this way, some will go that way." Then it got worse. Then when we landed and got off at Ellis Island, you were not allowed, you had to stay there until somebody picks you up. It was my uncle that was supposed to pick me up, but he was working that day, and the rumor was here that we would not be let out the Fourth of July. So, he went into work, and he worked with the House of Good Shepherd, and he got in touch with the priest there and asked him. And he said he thought we might be out, well, but he said, "Do not worry about her. If she gets off, I will take care of her until you come." So, I'm not, many time--I couldn't tell you how many time my name was called, and I'd take my little bag, thinking I was going, but I wasn't. It would be for different things. Then...

LEVINE: What would your name be called for, for example?

O'CONNOR: Uh, to send, I had to send a telegram to my uncle when he wasn't there, that I was in Ellis Island. That I had to do. Then maybe books and lunch. I was called two or three times, I remember. Oh, yes, for Father O'Brien, spoke to me then and told me I didn't have to worry, that I would be home that night. Then my aunt came. My aunt had very poor sight. She came and picked me up. And I had never seen my aunt or uncle--I did see pictures of them--but, she said, "Do you see anyone you know over there?" And who else, but my uncle that I had never seen! I can remember them things in...

LEVINE: What was it like in Ellis Island for you, the time that you...

O'CONNOR: Dreary. Very dreary. I don't know what country they were from because I didn't know French or Polish or nothing. They were all, to me, people. But they used to slip, some. Some of them had one, some of them two, some of them had three. And somebody said they were waiting all that time to be picked up. I don't know if that was true or not.

LEVINE: Mm.

O'CONNOR: And we were brought for lunch. We got lunch there that I did not enjoy. I think it was a stew with everything in the world in it. I did not eat it, I know. Then my uncle came about two o'clock and took me home. That was the Fourth of July.

LEVINE: What did, do you remember what you thought when you met your uncle?

O'CONNOR: Well, I heard about his wife, there. [Adoh PH] told me that his wife was very religious and very old-fashioned, which he had, because I don't ever remember her without a black veil. You know what, they used to wear the black veil years ago when there was a death in family. Thought her first cousin, I think, she wore the black veil for. I can remember that. But I was told about that before I left home. And my uncle's a very big, heavy man, very tall man. And I got along with them. I'd never no trouble with them. But when I came to their house, the room I was in was right off the front room. The Fourth of July, they told me nothing about the Fourth of July and firecrackers! The [ree den your PH] bus was only about a, less than a block, but he was in the block, you know, was a half a block over here. The Broadway bus, the [round

fat PH] bus, and a [nail PH]. There was all that commotion there, but I left, but you wouldn't hear a sound when you'd go to bed. So, I thought, "Well, if this"--I thought Dublin was bad, but this, to me, was wicked, wicked. Oh, I didn't tell you, I went to my uncle's and--we left home, the thirteenth. And we stayed in Dublin one night.

LEVINE: How did you leave home? What kind of transportation?

O'CONNOR: The train. We took the train to Dublin.

LEVINE: All fourteen?

O'CONNOR: Oh, there was a lot of us, there is. There was--my father and mother did not come with, they just brought us into where the train picked us up and took us to Dublin. We were one night there, and we thought that was noisy.

LEVINE: Had you ever been to Dublin before that?

O'CONNOR: No, no. I don't think I was ever in a train before. We didn't travel in my--I don't think I was ever in a train before that, that I can remember. But I was one week with my uncle and aunt, and then, that was very, very nice, very nice. I...

LEVINE: Oh, where were you there?

O'CONNOR: In Liverpool.

LEVINE: In Liverpool.

O'CONNOR: Mm.

LEVINE: And did you know...

O'CONNOR: He had his own--yes--he had his own business, and I used to help him--what do you call--fish and chips?

LEVINE: Ah.

O'CONNOR: That's the business, and I used to help them peel the potatoes, and well, I remember that. But she was a lovely woman. I liked her.

LEVINE: So, were there certain things that struck you that you had never seen before? What...

[END OF SIDE A, BEGINNING OF SIDE B]

O'CONNOR: Oh, namely, yes. I enjoyed England. I really enjoyed --there was nice neighbors there, and we... And something is trying to tell me, but I can't get that straight, that it was, there were radio that was coming out new. Would that be so? There was something coming out new in England because I remember my aunt's sister calling her and talking to her, and she was, couldn't get over how she could talk...

LEVINE: On the telephone?

O'CONNOR: If my...

LEVINE: Did you ever see a telephone before?

O'CONNOR: I don't think we had a telephone. But that I don't remember that we had a telephone, there. But there was something that was new, that she couldn't get over how you could hear what was going off, in so many miles away. I don't, I have not clear.

LEVINE: So, it was maybe a radio, maybe a telephone.

O'CONNOR: Becau-, yeah, I know when I came--that's why I'm thinking it might be the radio because when I came to my uncle's,

they had something with a big horn on it, you...

LEVINE: Oh, yeah.

O'CONNOR: That's what the kind of a, uh, they had there, and they were just putting that up, new, that I remember.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm.

O'CONNOR: So, you don't pay, I didn't pay too much attention to what was going. I was just going along with the day, that's all.

LEVINE: So, then... Well, the other people who came with you on the ship, did they leave from Liverpool, too?

O'CONNOR: We all left from Queenstown.

LEVINE: Oh, from Queenstown.

O'CONNOR: From Queenstown, we pulled out. We went and had to go into Queenstown and pull out from Queenstown. That I know.

LEVINE: Well, did the others go, uh...

O'CONNOR: Well, we all went together. We were all on the...the...

LEVINE: You, they all went to Liverpool beforehand?

O'CONNOR: Well, I went with my aunt and uncle. Another, the girl and her sister, went with her neighbor that was married there. And I don't know how the others went--I'm not sure how the others--but I stayed with my aunt and uncle, I know. And the other two was only just down the block from us. Somebody they knew from home, and they stayed with them. We broke it up like that. But some of them, I didn't know where they went at all, but we were all together on the steamer coming out.

LEVINE: And do you remember the name of the ship?

O'CONNOR: The *Franconia*, on her maiden voyage. They had--not the maiden--they went around the world before with the big shots, and we were the second time it was in the water.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, did you, were you in steerage or were you in...

O'CONNOR: Second class. We were in first class, that's sure.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, you had a cabin, then?

O'CONNOR: You had a cabin. I think there was... I know there was two, but there was four or not in the one, I'm not sure now, but there was two, I know...

LEVINE: Two sets of bunk beds?

O'CONNOR: You, I was in the bottom, and somebody was over me, that I do know. But I don't know if there was anyone in the other--I'm not sure of that, now, whether there was four of us or two there. That I couldn't say for sure, really. I think it was just two.

LEVINE: Now, describe what it was like, the voyage coming across...

O'CONNOR: Oh, I loved over. I enjoyed coming over. This, we had a good time, that's all I can say. Coming over, we had a good time. But I would never, never want to go back by steamer, never. If the airplane was not available when I went home, I would never have gone back. That's how much I did not enjoy the--I wasn't sick, but I wasn't just myself, all the way. They said it would be better if you were sick, but I was not what you'd say "sick,"

but I was not myself.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: We could go upstairs where they had the first class cabin and just walk around, but you couldn't go near their rooms. You could go up and...

LEVINE: On the deck.

O'CONNOR: On the deck, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: We used to do that.

LEVINE: So, do you remember any things, when you got to this country, that struck you as new and different?

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes, an awful lot, an awful lot. That Fourth of July, and I didn't get over it for a long time. After that, I didn't mind it so much. My aunt and uncle were very good to me when I came here. See, they had no family of their own, and they were, I had a good time with them. I enjoyed that. Then some of Mary's family kept coming

out, and they used to come to my uncle until they would get work, and then go by themselves. I think, I don't know if the girls ever did it. I think the girls used to stay with Mary. I think it was the boys that done that.

LEVINE: Hmm. And did you, what did you do, once you got here and you were living with your uncle, then what?

O'CONNOR: Well, for a while... The first job I got was in a little deli. That's when you had to weigh the butter by the quarter-pound just for the customer, you know, and all that. I can remember that very well.

LEVINE: Where was your uncle, by the way? Where was...

O'CONNOR: Pulaski Street. East New York, that was. I forget the number now, I think. I forget it. 142, I think, but I'm not sure, but it was Pulaski Street, near Reed Avenue, that I do remember. And we were in Saint John's Church since I came to the country. We went, I was in the, all, I moved around after we were married, a lot. But I was always in Saint John's Parish, I think, where you, where they went to school. Wasn't that--no, that's right. Ros-, [all the rosary ones PH]. [male voice in background: "Yeah."] I loved to move. After I got married, I loved

to keep moving. Every year, I was ready to move.

LEVINE: Huh. How was your uncle's house or apartment different from what you had been used to?

O'CONNOR: Oh, very different. We used to call them the railroad flats, in my time. That was, that, one room after the other. It was very different, very different. We were used to house by yourself. It was very different.

LEVINE: Were you disappointed, or how did you feel about, when you first came here, and you...

O'CONNOR: Oh, I wrote to my father to send the fare to me to come back there. I sure did. I wasn't happy at all here for a long time.

LEVINE: Do you know why? What made you so unhappy?

O'CONNOR: Well, I thought we'd be all together in a group, like we were in Ireland. That's how dumb I was. That's all I can tell you. Because the fellow that was out in Flatbush--and I was in East New York--came in to see me every Saturday night, and I wanted to know what mass he was going to the next day. He was out in Flatbush, and

I was over in East New York [laughing]. Because we would make our plans Saturday night what mass we'd go to the next day. So, there was lots of things that was very disappointing.

LEVINE: Anything else you can think of?

O'CONNOR: Nah, really I couldn't tell you much more. I couldn't tell you much more.

LEVINE: Were there any things that you liked that you hadn't been exposed to before?

O'CONNOR: Oh, well, after a while, after a little while, when I got used to everything, I was happy. But for the first couple of years, I don't think I was happy here.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm. So, what did you do? First, you worked in the deli.

O'CONNOR: Yeah, then I took care of a woman for a couple of years in a wheelchair. Then I worked in Schrafft's as a waitress for a while. Then I worked out in Greenpoint, and, where they pick little--it was too close. I didn't keep, stay long at that. It was very bad on the eyes. Doing something

with the light bulbs. I forget now, what button. I think I was taking care of that woman that was in a wheelchair when I got married, I think. No, I was in Schrafft's when I got married.

LEVINE: How did you meet your husband?

O'CONNOR: In the dance halls.

LEVINE: Now, tell me about the dance halls.

O'CONNOR: Well, we used to go 'cause--I think on Fulton Street, if I can remember now, Caches Hall was the name of it, I know. And the group of us would arrange, would have all the plans made over the week where you'd be called. We used to go there most of Sunday nights.

LEVINE: So, were these mostly people from Ireland, or...

O'CONNOR: They were. Most of them would be from Ireland. You'd meet the group, you know.

LEVINE: In Fulton Street in Manhattan?

O'CONNOR: No, Fulton Street, Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Brooklyn, uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Mm. I never went to a dance hall in New York.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Never.

LEVINE: What was it like? What would it be like?

O'CONNOR: Well, you had the Irish music there all the time.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And you'd talk with the people you knew, and you'd dance with them, and you'd have--you'd--I think we used to come out of there at eleven o'clock at night. And we didn't mind walking home if we had to, if nobody, if the boy didn't take you--we would--and you didn't think anything of it.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm.

O'CONNOR: Never.

LEVINE: So, you met your husband for the first time at Fulton Street in the dance hall?

O'CONNOR: In Caches Hall, that's right.

LEVINE: Do you remember the meeting?

O'CONNOR: The what?

LEVINE: Do you remember the time that you met him?

O'CONNOR: Oh, no. That I... Oh, we knew each other from the group, you know, there was a group of us that used to...

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: The same group used to go mostly every Sunday night.

LEVINE: I see. So, did you see him for a long time before you got married, or...

O'CONNOR: That I couldn't tell you for sure. Maybe a couple of years--I don't know--maybe two or three years. That I couldn't really tell you because then we were all

together. The same group would be there every Sunday night.

LEVINE: Hmm. And what was your husband's name?

O'CONNOR: Sean S. O'Connor.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you liked about him?

O'CONNOR: Well, he was tall. I always liked a tall man. That's all I can tell you. Anybody I looked at had to be taller or I didn't care for them. A short man, I couldn't ever stand. I don't know why. Even today, I don't like a short man.

LEVINE: Hmm.

O'CONNOR: I always liked a tall man.

LEVINE: So, how did your life change then after you got married? Did you keep working?

O'CONNOR: No, wor-...

LEVINE: Or you stopped?

O'CONNOR: No, I think I went back to work after the children were either in high school or grammar school. I think they were in high school before I went back to work.

LEVINE: So, how many children did you have?

O'CONNOR: Two.

LEVINE: And their names?

O'CONNOR: Thomas is one, here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And, Mary Margaret is her right name. We called her "Mary," and she's still Mary to me.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: And then I had seven grandchildren. They're all married today. And I have nine great-grandchildren.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

O'CONNOR: One of them will be going into college next year. And

the others are--how old are they--two of them is not a year yet, are they? [male voice in background: "No."]

LEVINE: No.

O'CONNOR: [male voice in background: "They'll be a year in...the end of the month."] Yeah, that's what I thought. But in November ["November."] for Sean's. And March, is it, for James's?

LEVINE: So, so...

O'CONNOR: And there's only one great-granddaughter in the nine great-grandchildren.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: The queen.

LEVINE: [laughs] So, do you think you held on to some customs that you learned when you were in Ireland? Are there things that you...

O'CONNOR: Oh, we still make the soda bread, and we make the potato--that's all of that. And for Saint Patrick's Day,

we still have corned beef and cabbage, for the Saint Patrick's Day dinner. That's about all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: 'Cause I like the food here, and we all enjoyed it.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

O'CONNOR: So, we didn't go back too much of that, but soda bread we still go for and the potato cake I still go for. That's about all.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How do you think it, um... What difference do you think it made to you as a person, the fact that you were born in Ireland and lived there until you were twenty years old, and then you came and started, really, a kind of a new life in another country? Do you think the fact that you were born someplace else and came here made a difference?

O'CONNOR: Well, I think to a certain extent it does, I think. It does to a certain extent, I think.

LEVINE: In what ways do you figure...

O'CONNOR: You never--I don't know--home... I'll never forget one time I went to visit in Ireland, and I said, "God rest my sister's soul," I said to her, "When I go home, I do..." She said, "Will you listen to that! When she goes home." She was mortified that I would call America my home. That I remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: But all of them was so--even when you talk about it, always, even today, even though I have nobody over there now, I would say, "home."

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Do you think there are certain aspects of your personality that you would say are Irish and certain parts that are American?

O'CONNOR: Not so much, now. I have nobody over there, now.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm.

O'CONNOR: Up until I had somebody that I could hear from and write to, there was a feeling there. But that feeling is not there anymore...

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: ...now, now.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, how do you feel about the fact that you came here. Are you glad that you did that or...

O'CONNOR: Oh, now I am, but it took me a little while.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: [laughs] Frankly, it took me a little while.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what are you most proud of, that you would say that you've done in your life? What makes you feel grateful or proud or...

O'CONNOR: Both of my children, for one thing, and my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren. That's the most thing I appreciate in America.

LEVINE: Yeah.

O'CONNOR: And it's a good place to live. That's all I can say. It's

a wonderful, wonderful place.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. You mentioned that you moved a lot when you were married.

O'CONNOR: Yes, when there was war. I loved to move.

LEVINE: Why did you love to move? Do you...

O'CONNOR: I dunno! I can't answer that question to anybody 'cause I know a man that used to visit with me said that "I can't see you buying a house." I said, "Why?" "Because you're ready to move every year. You can't do that if you buy a house." I remember that very well.

LEVINE: Mm.

O'CONNOR: Barry Shattern that said that to me.

LEVINE: Hmm.

O'CONNOR: But I thought, when the children...

LEVINE: And how is this phase of your life, how you feel in your old-age phase?

O'CONNOR: You feel a little lost now.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: You feel your days are almost coming to an end, or they should be. That's the way you feel about it now.

LEVINE: Well, you look very healthy. You look very vital.

O'CONNOR: [laughs]

LEVINE: [chuckles]

O'CONNOR: Days are good and days are bad. That's the way it goes.

LEVINE: Do you have a circle of friends now?

O'CONNOR: Well, I did have, but they're, uh, I have moved, and I'm away from them.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: And that's one thing I miss.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Because we could be together every day, where--I have new friends where I am now, but it's, they're different. There's no card games. There's no bingo. No bus rides. There's not one of them goes on a bus ride there.

LEVINE: Hmm.

O'CONNOR: [female voice whispering in background: "You have your card games. You go back, you play with them, still."] Yeah, but that's only one day... ["Every day."] That's only one day a week, Dot. [O'Connor laughs, and the man and woman begin talking in the background.] It's better than nothing, huh. I go back to my old friends to play a game of cards...

LEVINE: Oh, nice. And then...

O'CONNOR: ...if, now...

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: ...the day is nice, I'll take a ride. I have to take all two buses.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: So...

LEVINE: Okay, well, is there anything else you can think of that has to do with your childhood memories...

O'CONNOR: No, not too much. My teacher's daughter that died, that I would never forget, and that's the only sad thing I can think about school.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: I felt so bad when our teacher's daughter died. She was young and pretty.

LEVINE: Oh. Do you remember the circumstance?

O'CONNOR: I can't remember. She wasn't that long sick. But she was pretty. Theresa Judge was her name, and I really... And that's [fraud PH]. The teacher was very strict with us, and he'd give you the cane on the hand if you didn't behave.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: But, I got along in school. I never had any trouble in school, really.

LEVINE: How about...

O'CONNOR: Because if you had any complaints, you wouldn't tell it when you go home because you'd get slapped. You would say, "You must be... Maybe you didn't behave yourself or you wouldn't [laughing] be punished."

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. How about medical care? Do you remember any kind of ways that illness was treated when you were in Ireland?

O'CONNOR: I can remember my sister--I never went to a doctor, or never since I was born that I can remember--but my sister had some trouble. I don't know what it was. They had a name for it now. And it was down in here, and I can remember, and I thought it was terrible the doctor having to come in to her. 'Twas right in groin here, now. And she was only young that time.

LEVINE: A hernia?

O'CONNOR: No, it was some kind of a... There was puss in it, I think.

LEVINE: Mm.

O'CONNOR: And I know he gave her a powder that we used to bathe that. And I thought was terrible the doctor had to come in and look at her there. I thought that was unbelievable. But she got over it. But I never... I remember the whooping cough and the measles.

LEVINE: Was there a doctor right in the town?

O'CONNOR: Yes.

LEVINE: Were there any, like...

O'CONNOR: He would come out to you, if he had to. If you hunted a doctor out and that, the doctor would come out to you, if you were sick. But that's the only time I remember a doctor coming into the house when I was in Ireland, was for my sister once.

LEVINE: Were there home remedies that you had?

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: What, what... Do you remember any of those?

O'CONNOR: Well, I remember one. Now this was a cousin of my mother's. It was two daughters. It was with me that would go out there in the yard and pick up three or four--I don't know how many--a handful of leaves. And I don't know what they were, no more than you. And she would come in, and I don't know what she mix with it. Some kind of grease, I don't know was it butter or lard or what it was. And she'd cook it on top of the stove. And no matter what kind of a rash you got, that would cure it, overnight almost. That I remember. And I remember coming into the house with it and cooking it in the stove. That I do remember. But outside of that, no. We were healthy enough. That I must say. We didn't, we weren't a sickly family growing up.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm. How about, uh, people associate with Ireland, stories of leprechauns and, uh...

O'CONNOR: Well, we were afraid for...

LEVINE: Do you remember any of those from when you were younger?

O'CONNOR: Yeah, I remember. There were certain houses we would not pass at nighttime by yourself. That I do remember. I never seen anything, though. I never did. But at time, after it would get dark, there were certain places you would like to keep away from. But I never seen anything at all. But I heard a lot about them because in my time, the men would come and sit around the fireplace and my mother would read the weekly paper or whatever it was.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: And each one of them had their own story to tell. So, I heard enough about them, but I never seen a thing in Ireland, never.

LEVINE: Hmm. So, was storytelling kind of...

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: ...one of the things that happened a lot?

O'CONNOR: One would try to beat the other, yes, that I remember. That I remember. And I remember one man telling a story, but he was a great man for taking an extra drink. He was coming in from town on his way home, and we was very,

very hungry. And this man came over to him with a big plate of food. I don't know what was in it, now. But another man he knew that was out already came along and dumped the plate out of his hand. And he said, "I'd be gone with them if I had that food. If I ate, I'd be gone with them." That was the fairies, I think. As well as I can remem-, I can remember that, now, as a child growing up.

LEVINE: Huh.

O'CONNOR: But I never did see a thing, never saw a thing in Ireland that would scare you, never.

LEVINE: Huh. Well, that must be why the Irish are such good storytellers. [laughs]

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Run around and told stories like that.

O'CONNOR: Actually, you know, they would come out there--they used to--I remember that regular, 'cause at my house that was done very often, very often. And you'd listen to... And you'd be put up into a dark room after listening to them

stories, and you'd be scared stiff.

LEVINE: Ah. Now, it would be the men who would sit around the fire?

O'CONNOR: The men. Oh, yes, men only, men only. They'd come to hear.... There was one special paper--I forget the name of it now--a weekly paper, they called it. And you'd have to read that from--maybe some of them couldn't read, I don't know, or they enjoy telling the story, don't know what it was. But I remember my mother reading the paper for them. That I do remember.

LEVINE: Hmm.

O'CONNOR: And that was routine, once a week.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm. And how about the women? Did they get together and have any kind of social...

O'CONNOR: I'll tell ya, they used to spin the wool and card the wool. That would be a great time for the women to get together. I think that would be wintertime. And then springtime for the slitting of the potatoes. That was another time that women would help each other out. You'd

come to me today, and we work together. I'll go to you tomorrow, and we work together.

LEVINE: Ah. Now what does that mean, "slitting the potatoes"?

O'CONNOR: They had to sl-... Well, when they'd sow the potatoes... They knew how to do it. I didn't know how to do it. There was a certain way you had to cut the potato. You could cut it in three. You could cut it in four. It depended on how many eyes was on the potato, I think. But they knew how to do it. Then they would be putting them down. They're not doing that--that is not done in Ireland anymore. They plant them, and you'll get the potatoes from that. Around Easter time or a little after Easter, you'd have new potatoes from them. That I remember very well.

LEVINE: So, in other words, when they split them, and then where did they put them?

O'CONNOR: They had to put them down in the dirt. The men would do that.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: The women would just cut them for them the way they could plant them, only with a row at a time, and a row here and a row there. And by a little after Easter, you'd have new potatoes. That I remember. Or after Easter, you'd have the new potatoes from that. That was for the women, plus the carding and the spinning. But I don't think--they wouldn't put their husbands--they went out at nighttime, I think. Then they'd go to somebody's house, the two of them together maybe because we'd have the get-togethers. If my father and mother was out tonight, some of the group would come in to me, and we'd have the night together, whether we'd play cards or what we do would be up to ourselves.

LEVINE: You mean, your friends would come in?

O'CONNOR: Yes, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Well, they were our neighbors. They were right around the corner.

LEVINE: I see.

O'CONNOR: And if somebody's parents was out another night, we'd go to their house. And they always had an accordion that could play a few tunes if you wanted to dance. There was always something that we enjoyed, that wouldn't mean a thing to the people today.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: But we enjoyed it because that's all we had. There was no radios, no television. There was nothing to entertain you. You had to do it yourself!

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, it sounds like it was a very social village. I mean, people got together a lot.

O'CONNOR: Very clo-, we were very close. They might have fights in between...

LEVINE: Yeah.

O'CONNOR: ...but they, they would visit back and forth regardless.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did you have, like, a policeman in town?

O'CONNOR: Yes, each town had a couple of police. That is--their

own house. They didn't live in an apartment. They had their own house in the town. The policemen all lived together in town. They all lived in one house, the poli--what do you call that now--the stationhouse, I think. The police station, I guess. They all had, every town, had a home for them.

LEVINE: So...

O'CONNOR: They did not stay home and go out to work from home. They went out to work from their house in town.

LEVINE: Well, were they not married?

O'CONNOR: They were married. Now, why did, how'd that happen?! That can't have--the wife did not live--I don't know, now. I can't tell you. I can't remember that part of it. That I can't remember. But they had a...

LEVINE: Maybe they worked certain shifts where they stayed in the police house.

O'CONNOR: Now, that part of it I can't tell you much about really.

LEVINE: So who were the important people in town? The priest?

O'CONNOR: In town, the storekeeper.

LEVINE: Would there be a lot of stores or just a few?

O'CONNOR: Well as, where we were, was just maybe ten or twelve stores. You'd have a grocery store. You'd have, like, a delicatessen store, a liquor store. Then for all kind of groceries would be... And we could buy material. I think you could buy dresses in that town, too. No, I don't think you could buy 'em. You'd buy the material for makin' them, I think. Then you go into the bigger town. We were between [Beholer PH] and [Belavair PH] that was both small little towns.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: But you could go into the big town and buy the material and have your clothes made. We all--we didn't buy--I don't think I ever bought...

LEVINE: A dress.

O'CONNOR: A readymade dress. I don't think I did. I think they were all made. We had dressmakers.

LEVINE: So, there would be, like, the priest, the storekeepers...

O'CONNOR: Now, the priest had his own house by the church over in Ireland. Only the pastor that lived there.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: We only had two priests to a church in Ireland. There was never more than two. But the young priest, the curate, would have to go into town and take a room there. Now whether they're still doing that or not, but in my time, that's what they always did. The pastor had his own home with a housekeeper, but the curate went into town and took a room in town. They might've changed now, since, but in my time, that's what they did do.

LEVINE: Mm-hmm. And then who else would be, like, an important person in town?

O'CONNOR: Well, outside of the storekeepers, the undertaker.

LEVINE: Were funerals different in Ireland than they are here? Do you remember any?

O'CONNOR: Well, I went home for my brother's funeral. They are a little different. Not that much, not that much. They are buried in the casket, the same as here, and they leave them in the church the night before. The body is brought to the church the night before and left in the church alone all night. And then the mass is the next day. That's the way they have it now. They did not have that in my time.

LEVINE: Oh.

O'CONNOR: They did not have that in my time. You were buried right from your--I could see my grandfather laid out on the bed that he died in, I think it was.

LEVINE: So, they would be laid out at home.

O'CONNOR: There was--yeah.

LEVINE: How about when somebody was born? Were there any kinds of, uh...

O'CONNOR: There was a midwife.

LEVINE: ...ceremony, or...

O'CONNOR: There was a midwife... that my mother was always here, and that's what that--Mary's mother. She had, I think, twelve. And she was so big, you couldn't know she was pregnant, and the baby would be coming the next day, or else my mother would go over, wouldn't know what she was going for. My mother always helped her.

LEVINE: Your mother was a midwife? Did she...

O'CONNOR: She wasn't a midwife, but she would be always there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Her brother would come for her, and she would be always there. No, they had a woman come in from town. That's how they claimed that there might be a mistake. But I had two different years and months on mine. The woman that takes care of you would not go into town maybe for a month or two because one of my birth dates is November; the other is in October. But the way my brother explained it to me was that midwife might go in in October, she might go in--a number, instead of putting October down, she put November down. That's why--he tried to explain it to me. That's why I was mixed up with my...

LEVINE: Birth date.

O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So, then did you become a citizen, an American citizen?

O'CONNOR: Oh, yes, soon as I came here, I applied. You had to be here, I think, maybe a year or so before you applied for it. But you had to wait five years before we became a citizen.

LEVINE: And did you have to go to classes or take, uh...

O'CONNOR: Well, they gave you an idea of what you had to know, you know, the different things about the presidents and the senators and all that. Just give you--and they'd asked one or two questions.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: That's all. They didn't ask you much.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

O'CONNOR: Not many. Maybe who the president was or something. I forget now, but that's a good while ago.

LEVINE: Okay, well, we're near the end of the tape. Is there anything else you can think of that we haven't covered, or...

O'CONNOR: Well, there is other things I could--maybe, but I've forgotten about them. My memory is...

LEVINE: Your memory is wonderful.

O'CONNOR: I might think of it later on. No, I might think of it later on.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, well, I think we'll close here. I want to thank you very much.

O'CONNOR: Thank you. Now, listen. How does this go now?

LEVINE: I'll explain it. Let me just sign off. This is Janet Levine. I've been speaking with Ann O'Connor in her son and his wife's home in Park Ridge, New Jersey on October 26th, 1994. And, let's see, that makes you ninety-two

years old...

O'CONNOR: That's right.

LEVINE: ...at the time of this interview. 'Kay, this is Janet
Levine signing off.