

EI-572

MARIA DETSIOS SPANOS

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GREECE, 1915

AGE 14

SHIP NAME NOT RECALLED

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service.  
I'm here in Manchester, New Hampshire at the home of  
Mrs. Spanos, who came from Greece when she was  
fourteen years old, in 1915. Today is November 22,  
1994, and I'm just very happy to meet you and be here,  
and I'll start at the very beginning. If you tell me  
where you were born.

SPANOS: In Tsaritsani.

BOTOP: T-S-A-R-I-T-S-A-N-I.

LEVINE: Great. And--what-- when were you born, Mrs. Spanos?  
What day?

SPANOS: Uh, 17th from January.

LEVINE: January.

SPANOS: January, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, okay. And that was 19 . . .

BOTOP: '01.

SPANOS: '01.

LEVINE: '01. Right, okay. Now, did you live in the same town all the time until you were fourteen years old when you came here?

SPANOS: Uh, summertime we go (sto) Livadi . . .

BOTOP: Livadi. L-I-V-A-D-I.

SPANOS: For three months. After school, we go there for three months.

LEVINE: What was there? Why did you go there?

SPANOS: (*ya pos piya tos to beach*) [to go to the beach]

BOTOP: Vacation.

LEVINE: Say it in as much English as you can.

SPANOS: Summertime, you know, they go, because too hot in

Tsaritsani. And they go to a little, uh . . .

LEVINE: Like a resort area, or like a vacation area.

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah. For three months.

LEVINE: And with your family?

SPANOS: With my mother, yeah. My father was here in America, yeah.

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

SPANOS: Uh, John.

LEVINE: John. And what was his, what was your maiden name, his last name?

SPANOS: Detsios.

LEVINE: How do you spell that?

BOTOP: D-E-T-S-I-O-S.

LEVINE: Okay. And how about your mother? Her name?

SPANOS: Evangelia.

BOTOP: E-V-A-N-G-E-L-I-N-E.

LEVINE: And do you remember your mother's maiden name before

she married your father.

SPANOS: Um, Vristiniotiou.

LEVINE: Vris. . .

SPANOS: Vristiniotiou.

BOTOP: V-R-I-S-T-I-N-I-O-T-I-O-U.

LEVINE: And did you have brothers and sisters?

SPANOS: I have one brother.

LEVINE: And what's his name?

SPANOS: Uh, Arthur.

BOTOP: A-R-T-H-U-R.

SPANOS: He was here in America. Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Okay. So did you have grandparents that you knew when you were in Greece?

SPANOS: I have grand, uh. . .

BOTOP: Mother.

SPANOS: Mother, yeah.

LEVINE: And did you spend much time with your grandmother?

SPANOS: Oh, yes, until fourteen years we lived together.

LEVINE: Oh, she lived with your mother and father and you and your brother.

SPANOS: Yea, yes, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, what was, tell me about your grandmother.  
What do you remember most about her?

SPANOS: She was--to-- seventy years old, but she was too old, you know, in Greece, you know.

LEVINE: At that time, yeah. And would you do things with her?  
Would she take you . . .

SPANOS: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Like what?

SPANOS: Uh, I make pita, and he helped me. But my mother, no.

LEVINE: She didn't make pita.

SPANOS: My mother yesterday, she say, "Do this, and do that."  
But me and my grandmother, we make together, you know.

LEVINE: What did you call your grandmother?

SPANOS: Uh, Agoritsia..

BOTOP: A-G-O-R-I-T-S-I-A.

LEVINE: Was that her name, or that's what you called her?

SPANOS: Uh, the name, yeah. But I call, Babou.  
( she laughs )

LEVINE: Babou?

SPANOS: Babou. Greek, you know. (Greek) Babou, yeah, Babou.

LEVINE: And so would Babou, would she tell you stories, or did you. . .

SPANOS: Oh, yeah. Oh, yes, oh, yes. But she don't like me much. She just like, he like my brother.

LEVINE: Oh, she liked your brother.

SPANOS: Because she don't have boys, she have all girls, and she liked my brother.

LEVINE: Now, was she your mother's mother?

SPANOS: Yeah.Mother.

LEVINE: So your mother had sisters or brothers, and they had girls.

SPANOS: Just one sister, my mother have.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And she had girls.

SPANOS: Yeah, she have girls. She have one girl.

LEVINE: I see. So your brother was the favorite, because he was a boy.

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. (they laugh )

LEVINE: --um--So besides making the pita with your--with your--  
- grandmother, did you do anything else? Did you go  
places with her? What else did you do?

SPANOS: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. We go places. We go (pos lenso  
badoisto). [how you say]

BOTOP: For the grapes.

SPANOS: For the grapes we have, yeah. And she come with me,  
because I was young, to watch me.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, what would you do with the grapes? What did  
you do?

SPANOS: We make, uh, wine. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Were you picking them? Or you . . .

SPANOS: We picking them, yeah. We go home, and they, (Greek).

BOTOP: They make wine.

SPANOS: Because we have too many, you know, (Greek)  
[vineyards. Say that].

BOTOP: Vineyards. They had a lot of vineyards.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Is that what your father did? Did he have  
vineyards. --is that-- Was that his work?

SPANOS: Yeah. My father was, uh. . . (Greek) [Tailor say  
that].

BOTOP: Tailor.

SPANOS: Tailor. And he make the, like, (Greek) [Embroidery].

BOTOP: Fancy embroidery.

LEVINE: He was a very fine tailor.

SPANOS: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah. If somebody, you  
know, want to be married, my father make the things,  
you know. Yeah.

LEVINE: He made, did he make dresses, or did he made men's clothing.

SPANOS: No dresses. Just, uh, jackets, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh so when did your father go to America?

SPANOS: My father come here in 19, uh, '06.

LEVINE: 1906. --So--So that means, he was here the whole time?

SPANOS: He was here. . .

LEVINE: For nine. . .

SPANOS: In 19, uh, '11, he come in Greece.

LEVINE: And then did he stay?

SPANOS: And he stayed two, two years. In 1913 he come, and after 1915 I come with my mother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, um, now. . .

SPANOS: And he come with my brother, you know, 19, uh. . .

LEVINE: '13.

SPANOS: '13.

LEVINE: He came, uh-huh. So, now, who had the vineyards?  
Whose vineyards were you picking the grapes from? Who  
did, did the vineyards belong to the family, or . . .

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: I see. Okay, so,--um-- and who worked in them?

SPANOS: Well, we put, uh . . .

LEVINE: Did you--like-- put, like, you hired people to work in  
the . . .

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. They come, you know, from Yazur,  
(Greek).

BOTOP: Turkish.

LEVINE: You hired turks to . . .

SPANOS: And they come, because in Tsaritsani was Turkish  
before 1912. And we live very nice with the Turkish,  
very nice. And after 1912 they come in (?), Greek.

LEVINE: I see.

SPANOS: The first, uh, (Greek). [Village tell them, yes?]

BOTOP: Town.

SPANOS: Town, they take, that was Turkish, you know, we live with Turkish. In the first town they take, you know, the . . .

BOTOP: The Greeks.

SPANOS: The Greeks, yeah. (Greek)

BOTOP: Tsaritsani was close to Turkey.

LEVINE: So that was the first. . .

SPANOS: No, (Greek). [Tsaritsani was ruled by the Turks themselves]

BOTOP: Tsaritsani was ruled by the Turks.

LEVINE: I see.

SPANOS: But they were so nice, you know, so nice, yeah. They don't touch us at all. They go, you know, take some water because they don't have in the house. They don't touch the head of us. was small, you know. But, uh, very nice, the Turks.

LEVINE: Do you remember in 1912 when the change came, so that it was now Greek? What happened then? What do you

remember about it?

SPANOS: Uh, we fled from the Turks, you know, to Balas, because the Greeks come, and we go (Greek)[we left home tell her].

BOTOP: They left the homes.

SPANOS: They left the home. (Greek)[and went to the mountains to hide].

BOTOP: To hide.

SPANOS: But the Turks, the Turks don't bother us at all. And after the Greeks come, yeah, and the Turks go.

LEVINE: Did you see any fighting?

SPANOS: No fighting, no. I don't see, no. (Greek)[I heard only heard rifles].

BOTOP: They had guns.

LEVINE: So you just saw the Greek soldiers coming.

SPANOS: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And you ran into. . .

SPANOS: Yeah, they, yeah. They, we go out, you know. We give

them, uh, you know, after all (?).

LEVINE: You gave them food.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, wait. We're going to pause here for one second.

(break in tape ) Okay, we're resuming here, and we now have established that the reason why the Greek people in your town went to the mountains was you were afraid that the Turks would retaliate and would get back at the Greek soldiers, and you didn't want to be around if there was a battle. Okay. So, um, how long did you stay in the mountains?

SPANOS: Oh, no, just a, half a day, you know.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPANOS: Yeah, because the Turks, you know, go, yeah, and the Greeks come, and we come back.

LEVINE: Now, did the town change at all in those next couple of years when it was a Greek town and it wasn't a Turkish town? It was pretty much the same?

SPANOS: No, no, no, no.

LEVINE: It was just like it was before after that?

SPANOS: Yeah. 1940, (Greek). 1940. . .

BOTOP: But that wasn't the Turks.

SPANOS: Oh, oh not the Turks, no.

LEVINE: Okay. So,--um-- now, did you go to school at all?

SPANOS: Where?

LEVINE: Did you go to school. . .

SPANOS: In Greece? Oh, yeah. eleven, eleven years. I was eleven years.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what do you remember? Let me take this, because this is going to make a noise on the, it will make a noise. Uh, what do you remember about school?

SPANOS: What do I remember? (she laughs )

LEVINE: Did you go to school again when you came here?

SPANOS: No.

LEVINE: No. So that was the schooling that you had.

SPANOS: Yes, yes. Until, uh, (pende) [five], five, yeah.

LEVINE: You went to fifth grade.

SPANOS: Yeah, fifth grade. Because, uh, the school from the girls was in fifth grade. And after supposed to go with the boys, and my mother say, "No, the boys. . (laughs)."

LEVINE: Your mother didn't want you to go with the boys.

SPANOS: No, stay home. You have a lot of things to do.  
(she laughs )

LEVINE: What kind of things did you do? What kind of chores did you do around the house?

SPANOS: (Greek) [central things.

LEVINE: Sewing?

SPANOS: Sewing, yeah. Because my father was, uh, (Greek) [embroidery].

LEVINE: A tailor.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And did he teach you?

SPANOS: Eh?

LEVINE: Did your father teach you how to sew?

SPANOS: No, no, because we buy, you know, sewing machine, and the man who's, who sell the sewing machine, he come and hear me, yeah.

LEVINE: Now, did your grandmother and your mother, did they sew?

SPANOS: Uh, my mother make (Greek) [woven blankets tell her].

BOTOP: Woven.

LEVINE: Wove, with a loom.

SPANOS: Ya, yes

BOTOP: To make cloth.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And, let's see. And what kind of food do you remember your grandmother and your mother making? Do you remember food?

BOTOP: Food?

LEVINE: Different kinds of dishes that your grandmother and mother made?

SPANOS: (she laughs) Dolmades.

BOTOP: S-A-R-M-A-T-H-I-N-E-S. Grape vine leaves.

SPANOS: Hamburgers, yeah.

LEVINE: How do you spell it?

BOTOP: Hamburgers.

LEVINE: Oh, hamburgers?

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah. And (Greek) [but we had].

BOTOP: Stew.

SPANOS: Stew with the vegetables.

LEVINE: Now, did you have any, um, animals?

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah. We have, uh, (Greek) [goat].

BOTOP: Goat.

SPANOS: Goat, because we like the milk. And we have, uh,  
(Greek) [mule].

BOTOP: A mule.

LEVINE: A mule!

SPANOS: Yeah. (she laughs ) And we have a dog.  
(she laughs )

LEVINE: What was your dog's name?

SPANOS: Uh, I don't. . . I don't know what they said. Even now I forgot.

LEVINE: How about the donkey or the mule? What did you use the donkey for?

SPANOS: Uh, to bring, you know, things from, uh, (Greek).

BOTOP: Oh, they used to have silk worms.

SPANOS: Yeah, we have silk. Yeah, oh, yeah. Yes, yeah.

LEVINE: So the mule would carry the things that you needed to transport. Tell me about the silkworms. What do you remember about them?

SPANOS: We take, uh, (Greek) [seeds from, from the coco].

LEVINE: Cocoon?

BOTOP: Yeah

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah, cocoon. And my mother have it in small, in, uh, hot, uh, place. And after the. . .

LEVINE: The worms.

SPANOS: The worms come, and she know, you know, when she get,

was getting big and big and big. And after getting very big and they make, they want to put, you know, things to go to make the (Greek) [we put this big, say that we gathered, and put the cocoons on screens].

BOTOP: Mulberry leaves?

SPANOS: Huh?

BOTOP: Mulberry, they probably purchased from the mulberry so they could adhere and make the cocoon.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: So she had like leaves? Branches with leaves on them?

SPANOS: Uh, no.

LEVINE: No?

SPANOS: No.

LEVINE: Okay. So the cocoon would be getting ready to come out, and the worm. . .

SPANOS: Yeah, they go there.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPANOS: You know. They open, you know. But (Greek) [grab it good so that].

LEVINE: Say what you can in English and we'll try to. . .

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: So, okay. And after the worm was coming out, then . . .

SPANOS: They go. I don't know how many days they stay there, you know, they make the cocoon. And after we take it from there, and we put it in a big (Greek).

BOTOP: Tins.

SPANOS: We put it in the (Greek) [cans and we put it in the oven].

BOTOP: In the oven.

SPANOS: In the oven. And mother, she know, you know, how much. . .

LEVINE: Yeah. She knows how hot the oven gets.

SPANOS: Because if you don't put it there, they come back, you know, the, they open the cocoon and they come back. (Greek).

BOTOP: This was before they become a butterfly.

SPANOS: Yeah, a butterfly. Yeah. But my mother, you know, she know, you know, yeah, too many. In Tsaritsani, more people, you know, they make cocoons.

LEVINE: So --then ok--so then-- what did you do with the. . .

SPANOS: They come after from big, from Thessaloniki, and they, they buy, you know, and they make, there they make silk things, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: So did you have silk, things made out of silk. Did you wear things that were made out of silk?

SPANOS: No, no, no, no. We don't buy it.

LEVINE: Do you remember your clothing when you were little, and you lived; remember what kind of clothes you wore?

SPANOS: Uh, after (Greek) [thick cotton]. . .

BOTOP: Cotton.

LEVINE: Was it very warm where you lived?

SPANOS: Yeah. Summertime was warm, yeah.

LEVINE: Wintertime?

SPANOS: In wintertime, yeah. We don't see much snow.

LEVINE: And how about religion? Were your, was your family a religious family?

SPANOS: Greeks, orthodox.

LEVINE: Greek orthodox, uh-huh. And what kind of religious occasions did you, did you celebrate or observe?

SPANOS: Christmas, Easter.

LEVINE: Were they like they are here, or was there any difference there, the way you celebrated?

SPANOS: Well here, there they (Greek) [don't celebrate the (what do you call?)], Thanksgiving.

BOTOP: Oh, they don't. . .

SPANOS: They don't, no.

LEVINE: No. But was Christmas kind of the same as it is here?

SPANOS: Christmas, yes, yeah.

LEVINE: What other occasions did you,--did-- were there celebrations? What other occasions, not religious,

but, did you have namedays?

SPANOS: Oh, nameday, yes. (She laughs)

LEVINE: Tell about. . .

SPANOS: Oh, nameday. (She laughs)

LEVINE: Tell me what that was like, on your name day.

SPANOS: Marias Pania (Virgin Mary), Marias.

LEVINE: Marias is your name.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: So you, so what day did you celebrate?

SPANOS: Uh, after the. . .

BOTOP: August 15th.

SPANOS: The August, yeah.

LEVINE: August 15th was your. . .

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And what would happen? Tell me about what would happen. . .

SPANOS: We'd go to church, yeah. And we make things, you know.

LEVINE: Food?

SPANOS: Food, yeah. yes

BOTOP: The roast.

SPANOS: The roast, yeah.

LEVINE: Lamb?

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about presents? Did people give people presents?

SPANOS: No, no presents, no.

BOTOP: No.

LEVINE: People came and visited?

SPANOS: Oh, yeah, visited, yes. (She laughs) Yeah.

LEVINE: And how about music?

SPANOS: Music?

LEVINE: Yeah. Was there music?

SPANOS: No.

LEVINE: No? Okay.--um-- Now, how about, like, when someone was born. Was there a celebration, a particular celebration for the birth of a baby?

SPANOS: No.

LEVINE: No. How about weddings?

SPANOS: Oh, wedding, yes, oh, yes.

LEVINE: What were they like in Greece, a wedding? Can you describe what would be, like, a wedding, in Greece? What would a wedding be like? How would you celebrate?

SPANOS: Oh, we celebrate, you know, just like here.

LEVINE: Oh, just like here.

SPANOS: Just like here, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Okay, um, now, your father, when your father and your brother came to America, did they write you letters?

SPANOS: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: So you, what did you know about America, before you came? What did you think? What did you think it would be like?

SPANOS: I like it. Yeah, I like it, yeah.

LEVINE: You thought you'd like it. Did you know anything about it?

SPANOS: I don't know, I don't, but I like it, yeah.

LEVINE: So when you came, who did you travel with?

SPANOS: I come with my mother, you know. I come to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay, wait. Before we talk about that, tell me about when you left.

SPANOS: In, from Greece?

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPANOS: We left, uh, September 2, and we come here October 18th. (She laughs) Because, uh, in, uh, Larissa, in Greece, we don't have pass. . .

BOTOP: The right papers.

SPANOS: Yeah. And we send men, you know, in Greece (*afto*), and they bring the papers. And we last boat, that boat, you know.

LEVINE: You couldn't go on the boat you thought you were going to go on.

SPANOS: No, yeah. And after we take from Pieria, we take a boat and go to Italy. And in Italy they don't let us go. I don't know, ten days we stay there going to quarantine, yeah.

BOTOP: Quarantine.

SPANOS: Quarantine.

LEVINE: Were you examined? Did you have a medical examination there?

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah. In Ellis Island we have examine in--my eyes-- the eyes.

LEVINE: But, I mean, before you left Italy, were you examined before you got on that boat?

SPANOS: Yes, yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about it, what it was like?

SPANOS: (Greek) [when leaving you had to go automatically no kaka (poop) no America] (she laughs)

BOTOP: To have a bowel movement, otherwise they couldn't leave. (they laugh ) So they could examine it.

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah but at Ellis Island we --they-- look nice. And some people, they go back, you know because. . .

LEVINE: What was the name of the boat that you came on?

SPANOS: I don't know. I don't know. Yeah.

LEVINE: But it left from where?

SPANOS: From Italy.

LEVINE: What port? What was the name of the town?

SPANOS: Uh, I don't know. But I. . .

LEVINE: It was maybe an Italian boat?

SPANOS: Italian boat, yeah. Italian boat, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh, and, uh, do you remember anything about the voyage? When you were on the boat, do you remember what was that like? Were you down in the bottom of

the boat?

SPANOS: Oh, (Greek). No, (Greek).

BOTOP: Say it in English, Ma.

SPANOS: Eh, (Greek) [How do you say middle?].

BOTOP: Middle.

SPANOS: In the middle, you know, big . . .

LEVINE: Second class?

SPANOS: Big, big, uh, and we live, we sleep together, you know.

LEVINE: Like a dormitory.

SPANOS: Yeah, like a dormitory, yeah, yeah. And some people I think Jewish, (Greek) [have lice].

BOTOP: Lice.

LEVINE: Had lice.

SPANOS: Yeah. And all night, you know, all night.

LEVINE: Oh, no.

SPANOS: And in Ellis Island they look at, they say, "What's

that? What's that?" And they say, "Because of scratching." You know, yeah.

LEVINE: Now, do you remember when the boat came into New York, into the New York Harbor? When the boat you were on . . .

SPANOS: Yeah. They come, the boat come in Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPANOS: And we sleep one night there.

LEVINE: At Ellis Island.

SPANOS: At Ellis Island. And we thought we were going to go back, but they have, you know, Greek men, they say, "Don't say it, because they're gonna to call to you people, you know, if they accept you."

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh, uh-huh.

SPANOS: And after next day they say, "All right. Now the boat." And they give us bananas and I eat the banana, and I don't know how many years I can't eat banana after because . . . ( she laughs ) On the boat I throw up. (She laughs)

LEVINE: They gave you the banana at Ellis Island?

BOTOP: Yeah, yeah. To have it, you know, to eat, you know, in another boat, you know. Because we come after in Boston. (She laughs)

LEVINE: Oh, from Ellis Island you took another boat to Boston.

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah. (she laughs )

LEVINE: What else do you remember about Ellis Island? Do you remember what it looked like?

SPANOS: I think it looked nice, yeah.

LEVINE: It was big, right?

SPANOS: Oh, yeah, oh, yes. And, uh, were there a lot of people there?

SPANOS: A lot of people. Oh, yes.

LEVINE: And tell again about your examination. What kind of examination did you have there?

SPANOS: Uh, in my eyes. In, yeah.

LEVINE: So had you caught lice? Did you have lice then by the time you got to Ellis Island from the boat?

BOTOP: (Greek) [Did you have lice?]

SPANOS: What is that?

BOTOP: (Greek) [lice?]

SPANOS: No.

BOTOP: No, she didn't have it.

LEVINE: She didn't have it. Uh-huh.

SPANOS: But the other people there, oh. Because no bath,  
no. . . (she laughs )

LEVINE: Yeah, so what, how, do you remember where you slept in  
Ellis Island?

SPANOS: Beds. Yeah they have beds, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, beds.

SPANOS: One up, one down. (she laughs )

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And you were with your mother the whole time?

SPANOS: Yeah, my mother, and we have a small brother, three  
years old.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPANOS: And after come here, and after a couple of months he die.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPANOS: A couple of months, (Greek) [pnemonia].

LEVINE: So, um, did your father and brother meet, where did you meet up with your father and brother?

SPANOS: Here, in the depot.

LEVINE: In Boston?

SPANOS: No, no.

LEVINE: In Ellis Island.

SPANOS: No, in Manchester, Manchester.

LEVINE: Oh, in Manchester. Well, in other words, you took a boat from New York to Boston.

SPANOS: To Boston. From Boston a train to. . .

LEVINE: A train. Okay. Now, do you remember when you met up with your father?

SPANOS: Oh, yes. (she laughs )

LEVINE: What was it like to see them?

SPANOS: Yeah. (she laughs ) Two years I don't see him.  
Yeah, two years.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember what it was like, what he  
said or anything?

SPANOS: No.

LEVINE: So he had a place here to live, in Manchester?

SPANOS: Yeah, yes, yes. No, with another cousin of ours.

LEVINE: Was in Manchester.

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Now was your father working as a tailor?

SPANOS: Uh, no here. Here he work in an Amoske Mill.

BOTOP: On the railroad first.

SPANOS: Huh?

BOTOP: On the railroad.

SPANOS: No, before. 1906, rail, until California they make,  
you know, for the train, you know.

LEVINE: Your father worked on the railroad that was. . .

SPANOS: Before, you know, yeah. 1906, 1906.

LEVINE: The first time he came.

SPANOS: The first time, yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And this time he, what did you say? He was working at  
Am . . .

BOTOP: Amoske. These are mills. A-M-O-S-K-E.

SPANOS: Yeah. But now, Amoske Mill.

LEVINE: What kind of mill? What do they make?

SPANOS: Uh, cotton.

LEVINE: Cotton. Uh-huh.

SPANOS: Yeah, cotton.

LEVINE: So, uh, he was working here, and he was--uh-- staying  
with his brother? No, his . . .

SPANOS: No, cousin.

LEVINE: His cousin.

SPANOS: Cousin.

LEVINE: I see. Now, was there a large Greek community here in Manchester?

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: A lot of people from Greece?

SPANOS: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

LEVINE: So what did you do when you first came?

SPANOS: I stay home a couple of weeks, and after I go to work.  
(she laughs )

LEVINE: Where did you go to work?

SPANOS: And I say a lie, because they say, "How are you?" And I say, "Sixteen." Because I was fourteen. And they don't give. (she laughs )

LEVINE: Where did you go to work?

SPANOS: In Amoske, with my father. Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And do you remember what you did?

SPANOS: Uh, spindle. I don't know what's the name.

BOTOP: Spinner.

SPANOS: Spinner. Yeah.

LEVINE: And how long did you stay?

SPANOS: I stay two years. And after I engage and, uh, we go, my husband was, my. . .

LEVINE: Husband-to-be.

SPANOS: Yeah. He was in, uh, Vermont, and we go there with my father, my mother, my brother. Because they make cheese there.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPANOS: You know, with another company, Nasikas Company. And we go there, and I met there.

LEVINE: Now, how did you meet your husband?

SPANOS: Yeah, in Manchester.

LEVINE: How did you, how did you happen to see him? How did you. . .

SPANOS: Well, from the same place.

LEVINE: In Greece, you mean.

SPANOS: In Greece. (Greek) And we was third cousins.

(she laughs )

LEVINE: Oh. Now, did you know him when you were in Greece?

SPANOS: --Uh-huh--No from Greece, no, here, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Now, did your mother and father and his mother and father match you up?

SPANOS: He don't have no mother or father, my husband. Yeah.

But here, you know, because my father was an uncle, and my mother like him because she say, "You don't find no mother-in-law, and you're gonna be nice."

(she laughs ) Yeah.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: So did you like your husband right off when you first met him?

SPANOS: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Oh, yes.

LEVINE: So, now, was he --um--, he was living in Manchester, but then he went to Vermont and found work.

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah. Yes. And we go after, all move to Vermont for a couple of months. And after we come back.

LEVINE: And then what did your husband do after that?

SPANOS: When he come back? He work in a shoe shop. Because before work in a shoe shop, and they go there, you know, to make a milk, uh. . .

BOTOP: Cheese.

SPANOS: Cheese, and after, you know, a couple of months we make cheese. And after (Greek) [they don't have milk].

BOTOP: The cows didn't have milk or something.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: I see. But they expected to stay there. When they moved to Vermont. . .

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: They thought they'd stay there.

SPANOS: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: But then the cows didn't have. Okay, so, um, then, what was your husband's name?

SPANOS: Uh, Stergios Spanos.

LEVINE: Spell it.

BOTOP: S-T-E-R-G-I-O-S. Spanos, S-P-A-N-O-S.

LEVINE: And, um, how many children did you have?

SPANOS: Who?

LEVINE: You.

SPANOS: Two.

LEVINE: Two. And their names?

SPANOS: Irene and Jimmy. But my son. . .

BOTOP: Passed away.

SPANOS: Die, for, seven years ago? Seven years ago.

LEVINE: And you have grandchildren?

SPANOS: Grandchildren. Four grandchildren. And five great-grandchildren. (she laughs )

LEVINE: Okay. So, now, did you work at all after you got married?

SPANOS: I work three months. I say to my husband, "Take me in shoe shop." And he take me, and after I was

pregnant. . .

LEVINE: Then you stopped.

SPANOS: No more work.

LEVINE: Yeah. When you say a shoe shop, you mean his own shop, or you mean a shoe. . .

SPANOS: No, no. Uh. . .

LEVINE: Manufacturing.

SPANOS: Yeah. McElwain.

LEVINE: McElwain.

BOTOP: McElwain.

SPANOS: Yeah.

BOTOP: M-C-E-L-W-A-I-N.

LEVINE: Is that still here in Manchester?

BOTOP: No.

LEVINE: Um, well, let me ask you, what difference do you think it made in your life, the fact that you started out in Greece and then you came here when you were fourteen

and you lived most of your life here. Do you think it made a difference that you came from Greece?

SPANOS: No, no. I like it here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Have you gone back to visit?

SPANOS: Thirteen times. (They laugh) Thirteen times.  
(They laugh)

LEVINE: What customs do you still keep that are Greek? What kinds of things do you still do that you do because they were done in Greece and you learned them when you were little?

SPANOS: I don't know.

BOTOP: Christmas and Easter.

SPANOS: Huh?

BOTOP: Christmas and Easter.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: You celebrate them the same way.

SPANOS: Yeah, same way.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, what do you feel proud of? What makes

you feel proud that you did in your life? What do you feel good about having done?

SPANOS: For my children.

LEVINE: For your children.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And, uh, do you think you taught them any ways that were Greek, Greek ways of, of being?

SPANOS: Yeah, I talked Greek to them.

LEVINE: Oh, you talked Greek to them.

SPANOS: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, so both your children know how to speak Greek.

SPANOS: Yeah, and the grandchildren I talk Greek. They talk me English, and I talk them Greek.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Do you think it's important that they know how to speak Greek?

SPANOS: I like for them to talk Greek.

LEVINE: Why do you think it's important to carry on the Greek family traditions?

SPANOS: Because they're Greek. ( she laughs )

LEVINE: Yeah. Could you say what it means to you to be Greek?  
What does it mean to you to be Greek?

SPANOS: I don't know.

LEVINE: It's kind of a funny question, yeah. How about  
America? How do you feel? Do you feel as though you  
are an American?

SPANOS: I like American. I like them.

LEVINE: Do you think your life would have been very different  
if you had stayed in Greece?

SPANOS: Oh, oh, yes.

LEVINE: What would have been different?

SPANOS: They look really better, you know, yeah.

LEVINE: But you like to go back, so I guess you like both  
worlds.

SPANOS: ( she laughs ) I can't now, because my brother died,  
and I don't feel, you know, I'm no, my feet hurt me,  
and I don't. But thirteen times was enough. Every

two years, every two years.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And your husband would go back, too, with you?

SPANOS: My husband come 1962, I go with my husband. And after 1965 he died. But. . .

LEVINE: What is, what is this time of your life like for you, your old age time? How is this time of your life?

SPANOS: Now?

LEVINE: Yeah.

SPANOS: I stay home.

LEVINE: You stay home.

SPANOS: Watch the TV. And some, with my friends telephone, that's all.

LEVINE: Do you have friends here in Manchester?

SPANOS: I have too many friends before, but they die. For two years, five, six, six, my friends die.

LEVINE: How do you feel?

SPANOS: I feel bad.

LEVINE: No, you feel bad about that, but I mean, as far as your own health?

SPANOS: Yeah, I feel good.

LEVINE: You certainly look good. You look like you have more energy than I do.

SPANOS: I feel good, and the doctor don't find me nothing. But I say, "Doc, my feet." "Arthritis. I can't do nothing for you," he say. And one day he say to me, "Tell me, Maria, what you do when you was too healthy?" I say, "Maybe six months on the beach." That's all I.

LEVINE: On the beach?

SPANOS: Six months we live on the beach. We have house on the beach. Six months there, and six here.

LEVINE: Huh. So you think that you go in swimming?

SPANOS: No. We don't go to the water, but I have nice piazza in the back, in the front, and I stay here, yeah. And the fresh air, you know the fresh air.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, is there anything else that you can think of that has to do with changes that you've seen in your lifetime, things that, I mean, like, when you started out in Greece, probably there were no automobiles.

SPANOS: No, no.

LEVINE: In your town.

SPANOS: No automobiles at that time, no.

LEVINE: Do you remember when you first came here, some of the things that you saw that you had never seen before? Do you remember when you came to this country and you saw some things that you never saw before. Do you remember that? Okay. Um. . .

SPANOS: My brother have a car, automobile here. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Your brother had one.

SPANOS: Oh, yes, yes.

LEVINE: When he came and picked you up?

SPANOS: Huh?

LEVINE: When he came. . .

SPANOS: No, no, after, after.

LEVINE: After.

SPANOS: And he take us, and we go to the beach, you know, and come back. Yeah. He make taxi driver, you know. He work in the shop, in the shoe shop, but they have the car for the taxi.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And did your brother stay here in Manchester?

SPANOS: Yeah. 1942 he go to Greece.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then he. . .

SPANOS: And he don't come back after, you know.

LEVINE: Oh.

SPANOS: He married there. And, because my mother and my father left here 19, uh, '20, '24. . .

LEVINE: They went back.

SPANOS: They go back, yeah. And they stay there. And after I say to my brother, "Go there, because my mother, mother and father are alone." And he go. In 1944, my husband go there for six months, and if I. . .

LEVINE: And you stayed here.

SPANOS: Yeah, watch my. . .

LEVINE: Your children, uh-huh.

SPANOS: Yeah. He going over to make some business, but they don't like it. And he came back. In 1949 he send me, "Go to see your mother and father."

LEVINE: Ah, I see. Now I see why you went so often visiting.

SPANOS: Yeah. (she laughs )

LEVINE: Well, why do you think they chose to go and stay there and you chose to stay here?

SPANOS: Because my mother have arthritis, and she thought maybe there it's going to get. . .

LEVINE: It was better there.

SPANOS: Yeah. It was better there, because they go in, uh, a Leepsoi, what, hot water, you know.

BOTOP: Health spas.

SPANOS: They make, yeah, yeah. They go, you know, every year, and I go twice. Yeah.

LEVINE: Did it help your arthritis?

SPANOS: Because the water, the hot water come from the mountains, you know, hot water. Yeah. I mean, I don't know what happened that water, and they make you good, yeah. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, is there anything else you can think of that maybe we haven't, we haven't covered? Anything else you can think of to say about, uh. . .

SPANOS: What else?

LEVINE: Yeah. Are there any other family legends, Irene, that you can think of that maybe we haven't covered?

BOTOP: I can't think of any. I will say her good luck is due to my father's businesses.

LEVINE: His businesses in the. . . Well, wait, he worked in

the shoe shop.

BOTOP: Oh, and then he left.

LEVINE: And then, your husband left the shoe shop.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what did he do then?

SPANOS: Oh, he go to, for the Greece, for the cheese. And after he come back he go again. And after he open. . .

BOTOP: The candy store.

SPANOS: The candy store.

LEVINE: And did you help him in the candy store?

SPANOS: Yeah. Another lady, you know this husband, my husband and another man.

BOTOP: No, they didn't work there. They just helped him out.

SPANOS: Helped. (Greek) [Helped with the chocolate]. We made the boxes for the chocolate.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. So your husband had a partner.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: A partner in the candy store.

SPANOS: Yeah, in the candy store.

LEVINE: And then, and then did he stay in the candy store? Is that what he did the rest of the time?

SPANOS: A couple of years, a couple of years.

LEVINE: And then after that what?

SPANOS: After that we often to Derby.

BOTOP: Beerholtzer.

SPANOS: Yeah, Beerholtzer.

BOTOP: And tonic.

SPANOS: Yeah. For a couple of years, huh? A couple of years.

BOTOP: We got a lot of years.

SPANOS: A lot of, yeah, yeah. We buy this house, we buy the house on the beach and . . .

LEVINE: Ah. So did he then, was that the business he stayed in until he retired?

SPANOS: Yeah. Uh, he, yeah. (Greek)

BOTOP: He had to give it up because the state took. . .

SPANOS: They take the, yeah.

LEVINE: Took over all the alcohol.

BOTOP: No, no, they took over the road. They wanted to make a road, and the state took over his place.

LEVINE: Oh, so they had to buy him out.

SPANOS: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: So that proved to be a good thing?

SPANOS: Yeah.

BOTOP: Well, not as good as it was.

LEVINE: Not as good as it could have been, yeah.

SPANOS: And after he go work for a couple of years in the Silver Brothers. They sell beer, you know.

LEVINE: Beer?

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So he made quite a success of himself in this

country.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, um, maybe, now, did you visit Ellis Island, did you say? No. No.

SPANOS: No.

LEVINE: Not since that day, yeah. Okay. Well, if there's nothing else you can think of to say, I think it's a good place to close. I want to thank you very much.

SPANOS: You're welcome.

LEVINE: It was very enjoyable talking with you, and it was wonderful to see you.

SPANOS: Thank you. (she laughs)

LEVINE: In such good spirits and health and energy.

SPANOS: Uh-huh. (Greek)

LEVINE: Okay. This is Janet Levine. I'm speaking with Maria Spanos, who came from Greece in 1915 when she was fourteen years old.

SPANOS: Yeah.

LEVINE: It's November the 22nd, 1994, and you must be ninety-three. Are you ninety-three years old?

SPANOS: Ninety-three, yeah.

LEVINE: Ninety-three years old at the time of this interview.

SPANOS: Next year I'm going to be ninety-four, January 17th.  
(she laughs)

LEVINE: Okay. Well, and I want to say, um, that, uh, we're here in Manchester, New Hampshire at Mrs. Spanos' home, and Irene Boto, Mrs. Spanos' daughter is here with us, and has been our speller. (they laugh) And translator. So thank you very much. This is Janet Levine signing off. Thank you.